



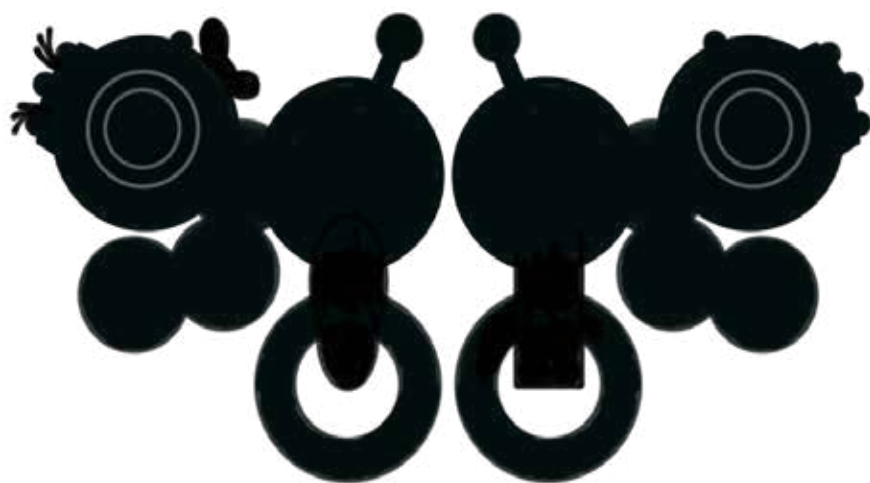
A Return to Integrity in Animation

A Liberal Arts Approach to Improving the Academic & Spiritual Influence
of Animated Television Shows for Children

Arnulfo M. G. Jacinto, Junior

Master of Fine Arts Thesis
Liberty University
School of Communication & the Arts
Department of Studio & Digital Arts





A Return to Integrity in Animation:

A Liberal Arts Approach to Improving the Academic & Spiritual Influence
of Animated Television Shows for Children

By Arnulfo M.G. Jacinto, Jr

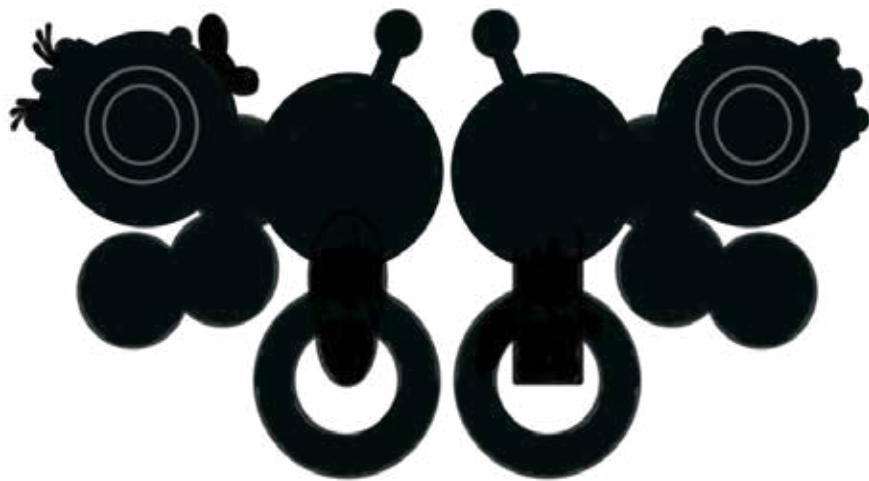
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts
in Studio Arts at Liberty University

Professor Ronald L. Sumner, Chair

Professor Paul E. Reynolds, Reader

Professor Michael Stephen Glaze, Reader

Professor Todd Smith, Department Chair



All Rollerbot characters and images not otherwise designated
are the copyrighted property of Arnulfo M.G. Jacinto, Junior
with all rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form
without express written consent of the author,
Arnulfo M.G. Jacinto, Junior.

©2021

Acknowledgements

Obtaining a high level of academic status is never done alone. This is no exception. There have been many people in my life that have helped me to reach this apex of my academic career. With that being said, there are specific individuals in my life that have impacted my life so dramatically that they must be acknowledged with my deepest gratitude and heartfelt thanks. Without them, this achievement would have never even been possible.

To my Heavenly Father

With all my heart and soul, I give praise and glory to my Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit for the talents They have blessed upon me, for keeping me from danger, and guiding me through these nearly six decades that I have been upon this earth. To my Heavenly Father, I dedicate all my talents and this thesis.

AD DEI GLORIUM

To Alisa June Jacinto (My Darling Bride)

It was no coincidence that the same month and year that I gave my life to the Lord, you came into this world. I requested from the Lord that my future wife have only two things: (1) that she be a Christian with a love for Jesus Christ and (2) that she be a high caliber athlete. The rest was up to Him. He granted my request, and I have never been happier in my life. The Lord had a plan for us to glorify Him. Alisa, you know the pain and heartache that plagued my academic life. You took my self-esteem and, through God's work, took me to heights I never thought possible. You strengthen my weakness; you believe in my dreams and goals. You, my Love, are the greatest gift God has blessed upon me.

To Rosalie Gloria Murillo Jacinto-Carabajal (Mom)

You have taught me determination and have given me the gift of persistence, drive, and a do-not-quit attitude. You have taught me, through your example, the meaning of hard work. Your skills as a preschool teacher for almost 50 years showed me that we must keep pushing no matter how hard the road becomes. Your love and guidance have brought me to where I am today. I will continue to push beyond this point. I love you very much and am so proud to be your son.

To Arnulfo G. Jacinto, Sr.
(Dad: 1933-2002)

You blessed me with your gifts of humor, imagination, and the ability to dream and create. You are partly responsible for the development of the Rollerbots. You told me never to allow myself to be placed in a box. You told me to paint, draw, and create whatever comes to my heart and mind and to be true to myself. As Mom has given me the drive and determination, you have given me the gift of imagination. I praise God for the both of you and how you have influenced who and what I have become today.

To James Lawrence Ontiveros
(Father-In-Law)

We have come a long way in such a short time. My love for you goes beyond words. I told you on the day I married your beautiful daughter that my goal was to make you the proudest father-in-law. I also told you that would be the only time I would say that because I would let my actions show beyond just my words. Your smile, your jokes, and the way you have talked about me, defended me, and stood by my side completely resolute have shown your honor for me. Thank you for your comments, suggestions, and advice in this thesis. Your skills as an administrator, as a grand juror, and teacher had been so valuable. I love you and thank you so much.

To Lynda June Ontiveros
(Mother-In-Law)

You did not have to spend the long, arduous, and painstaking hours to edit my thesis, yet you did. You, Alisa, and Dad tag-teamed my work. You are not only beautiful but also the most loving, caring Momma, a son-in-law could ask for. You have treated me as your own son. Your actions, the way you talk to me, and how you support and defend me as well shows me how proud you are of me. You truly are my second mom. I have truly been blessed. I love you for your support and belief in me and my work. We will only go up from here.

To Paul & Agnes Reyle

Our friendship spans over 45 years, which has now transformed into a true older brother and older sister type of love. From the time I came to you, Paul, as a young teen looking for my place and searching for meaning in life, you helped me find it as my Coach in swimming. You taught me just how brilliant I am, despite having been told differently. Angie, you showed me that I was truly a gift to this world with my talents, not just in the Arts but as a person with compassion, love, and understanding. You both peeled away the garbage that crippled me, and you stuck by me. Neither of you gave up on me. You pushed me; you drove me; and today I have become who I am because of how God blessed me with your love.

Paul, you wrote in my yearbook some 40 years ago and said the following, “Arnold-you have skills and talents you are not even aware of. If you believe in yourself just half as much as I believe in you, you will fly as high as the eagles. Remember this- It is far better to aim for the stars and just fall short, than to aim for the ground and hit it. Fly, the world is yours to go after.” Because you and Angie showed me who God made me to be, I am now among the stars.

To my committee:

*Professor Ronald L Sumner
(Chairman)*

I thank you for the true critiques, the honesty, and your patience with the re-do’s and re-do’s and re-do’s. You respected and believed in me and my skill set enough to continually push me further and accept nothing but my very vest. I am so going to miss our Monday afternoon conversations—not just about the thesis but about life, God, skills, family, and our goals. You not only treated me as a colleague but as a friend in whom you could confide as I could in you. You challenged me in a way that I needed while offering the support and encouragement I needed along the way. I could not have asked for a better chairman!

*Professor Paul E. Reynolds
(Committee Member)*

You knew me before I even knew you. (No, this is not a paraphrase from Scripture). You have told me that when you first saw my portfolio in the committee review you were impressed. I have so enjoyed our dialogues and conversations of substance that we held for substantial periods of time. It has always been an honor and pleasure to talk with a man of such intellect, wit, and wisdom, as well as true humility. I will miss walking the halls of this institution with you and discussing historical events, dates, and the possibilities of things that may or may not have happened in the past antiquities. You and your family have been a blessing to me and my wonderful wife.

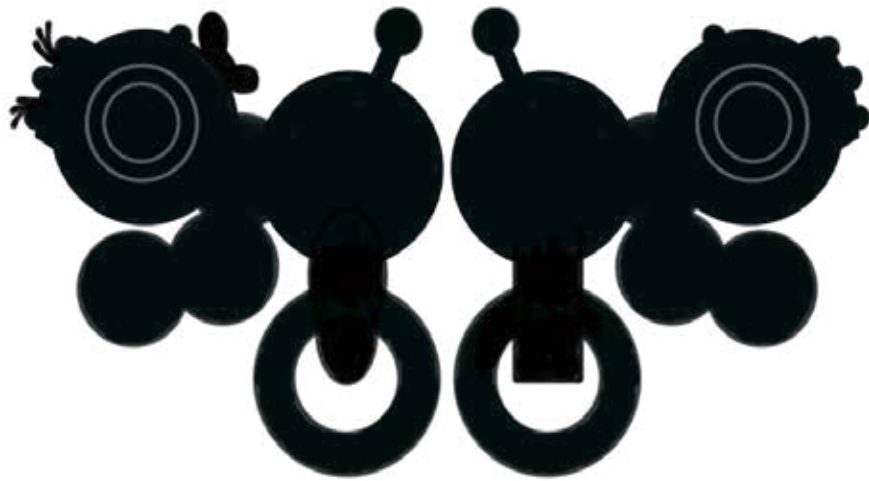
*Doctor M. Stephen Glaze
(Committee Member)*

“Never judge a book by its cover,” as the old adage goes. I think that applied to the both of us. I thought you could never teach me how to throw on the wheel—due to my past experiences I really thought there was no way I could learn. You thought all I could do was make round balls to create these characters you never heard of called “Rollerbots”. Then something blessed happened—praise be to God . . . you taught me how to throw. And not just simply throw, but I made a trophy and even a Liberty Bell, as well as bowls, decorative cups, and mugs. You recognized my attention to detail when I created an eagle with individual feathers, a small bee with antennae, and roses with individual petals and veins. But then our relationship went even further.

We recognized each other's passion for the Lord. We had dialogues and even debates in a very respectful manner. We respected each other's talents, philosophies, and Christian walk. You, Sir, are a scholar and gentleman. You could spot the shortcomings in my work. You recognized when I was trying to move fast through a project not because I was trying to find the easy way out but because I was not only a grad student but a businessman and teacher, as well. You knew my plate was full, but you still pushed me and demanded nothing but the best of my work. I thank you.

To the Professors on my committee

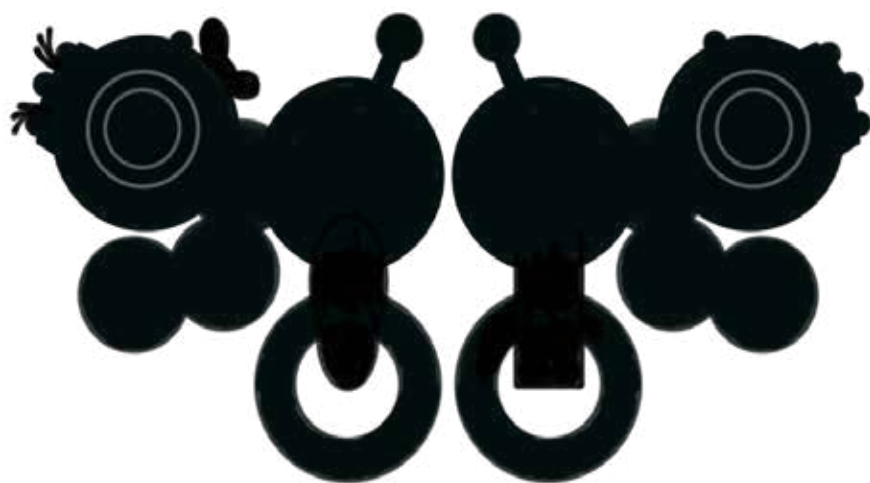
I have thanked you all individually; however, the comments I stated to you individually also apply to all three of you. I truly want to recognize you all and how you have helped me grow in my skill set. I am honored that you accepted my request to become my thesis committee members. Now and forever, you have made an indelible mark in my heart, soul, and work. You three will be with me for as long as the Lord keeps me here on this earth. I thank you for your dedication and hard work in this thesis.



Per gratiam Dei consociamur, per virtutem Dei vincimus

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Purpose of Study	1
Research Questions	2
Assumptions	2
Bias	2
Limitations	3
Methodology & Scope	4
Summary	3
Chapter 2: Literature Review	5
The Art & Influence of Chuck Jones	6
Animation Evolving through the Decades	8
Art & Technology	16
Violence in Television	18
Effect of Cartoons & Children's TV Shows on Children's Social Behavior	24
Models to Follow in Animation	27
Summary	30
Chapter 3: Visual Process	31
Development of the Rollerbots	32
Evolution of the Rollerbots	37
Development of the Elite 7 Characters	39
Resurgence & Relevance	41
Liberal Arts Infusion	41
Artistic Integrity	43
Athletics, Sportsmanship, & Leadership	46
Diversity: Multi-cultural	47
Diversity: Disabled	47
Modernization	48
Disting Genders	49
The Importance of Visual Aids	50
The Changing Nature of Storyboards	52
Summary	55
Chapter 4: Visual Solution	57
Artistic & Spiritual Integrity	57
Character Development: Elite 7	64
Infusion of Liberal Arts Education	78
Character Development: Librarians of Historical Culture and Knowledge	81
Fantasy vs. Reality	92
Biblical Depiction of Genders and Marriages	94
Animation & Mixed Media Model	109
Conclusion	137
Bibliography	141



List of Figures

Figure Name	Page
Fig.1 Screenshot of Winsor McCay's <i>Gertie the Dinosaur</i> (©1914 Disney)	5
Fig.2 <i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i> (©1937 Disney)	5
Fig.3 Warner Brothers Merrie Melodies' character Bugs Bunny (©1960) was directed by Chuck Jones	6
Fig.4 Chuck Jones also directed this Merrie Melodies' cartoon entitled <i>Duck Dodgers in the 24 ½th Century</i> (©1953 Warner Brothers)	6
Fig.5 Wile E. Coyote and the Roadrunner from the original cartoon <i>The Road Runner Show</i> (©1966-1973 Warner Brothers) created by Chuck Jones	7
Fig.6 Dr. Seuss' <i>How the Grinch Stole Christmas</i> (©1966 CBS) is an animated special directed by Chuck Jones	7
Fig.7 Example of the smear technique from <i>Hare Do</i> (©1949 Warner Bros.)	8
Fig.8 <i>The Scarlet Pumpernickel</i> (© 1950 Warner Bros.) directed by Chuck Jones	8
Fig.9 <i>Forward March Hare</i> is a Looney Tunes cartoon directed by Chuck Jones featuring Bugs Bunny. (©1953 Warner Bros.)	9
Fig.10 The Merrie Melodies cartoon <i>Dough for the Do-Do</i> (©1949 Warner Bros.)	9
Fig.11 <i>The Flintstones</i> (©1960-66 Hanna-Barbera Productions) was the first animated series to hold a prime-time slot on television	10
Fig.12 <i>Jackson Five</i> (©1971-73) was an ABC series produced by Rankin/Bass and Motown Productions	11
Fig.13 <i>The Harlem Globetrotters</i> (©1970-71) was produced by Hanna-Barbera and CBS Productions	11
Fig.14 Movie poster for <i>Who Framed Roger Rabbit</i> (©1988 Touchstone Pictures)	11
Fig.15 <i>The Simpsons</i> is the longest running TV scripted TV series (©1988 Fox Broadcasting Company)	12
Fig.16 <i>Beavis & Butt-Head Experience</i> is a comedy album that was released in 1993 by Geffen Records based on the characters from the MTV animated series	12
Fig.17 <i>The Maxx</i> (©1995) was an MTV series based on the graphic novels of Sam Kieth	13
Fig.18 MTV created the label Oddities to showcase shows like <i>The Maxx</i> and <i>The Head</i>	13
Fig.19 <i>Ren & Stimpy</i> aired on Nickelodeon (©1991-1996)	14
Fig.20 <i>Rugrats</i> aired on Nickelodeon (©1991-2004)	14
Fig.21 Two scenes from <i>Steven Universe</i> (©2013-2020 Cartoon Network) depicting a same-sex wedding ceremony followed by a kiss between two lesbians	14
Fig.22 <i>Adventure Time</i> finale showed a kiss between gay characters Princess Bubblegum and Marceline the vampire. (©2010-2018 Cartoon Network)	15
Fig.23 Mr. Ratburn from the kids' show <i>Arthur</i> came out as gay and was married to another male character in the 22nd season's premiere (©2019 PBS)	15
Fig.24 Example of cel animation found at https://www.timetoast.com/timelines/history-of-animation--69	16
Fig.25 Movie poster for Disney Pixar's <i>Toy Story</i> (©1995)	17
Fig.26 Animated image of Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher) in <i>Star Wars: Rogue One</i> (©1995 Lucasfilm and Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures)	18

Fig.27	<i>Davey and Goliath</i> (©1966-2004 ELCA)	27
Fig.28	In the 1970s, <i>Davey and Goliath</i> (©1966-2004 ELCA) introduced new friend Jonathan.	27
Fig.29	<i>VeggieTales</i> (©NBC Universal) videos include Biblically based stories brought to life by fruits and vegetables	28
Fig.30	<i>VeggieTales'</i> (©NBC Universal) movie Jonah based on the Bible story premiered in 2002	28
Fig.31	<i>Schoolhouse Rock</i> (©Disney) was revived with old and new episodes from 1993 to 1996.	29
Fig.32	Poster from the movie <i>The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader</i> (©Disney Netflix) based on the series by C.S. Lewis	30
Fig.33	The Rollerbots were inspired by my Volkswagen Bug	33
Fig.34	Close-up image of the Rollerbot showing the gear shift	34
Fig.35	Close-up of the second revision of the wheel	34
Fig.36	Huey from the movie <i>Silent Running</i> (©1972 Universal Pictures)	34
Fig.37	Robbie the Robot from <i>Forbidden Planet</i> (©1956 MGM)	34
Fig.38	Close-up of Rollerbots communicating with their spear-like antenna	35
Fig.39	Close-up of Rollerbots showing the hearing pads	35
Fig.40	First Rollerbot life-sized sculptures were only three inches high. Here they are propped against a toaster. to show their size in relation to a common household object	36
Fig.41	Candid shot on the set of the original <i>Star Wars</i> (©Fox, Disney, Lucasfilm) movie that shows the height of R2D2 in relation to average-height men (https://imgur.com/gallery/jKAAb)	37
Fig.42	Comic strip that appeared in the March 1995 edition of the <i>28th Street Magazine</i>	38
Fig.43	Ad featuring the Rollerbots that appeared in the July 1995 edition of the <i>28th Street Magazine</i>	38
Fig.44	The Elite 7 were first presented in 1996 as part of my Senior Seminar at USC	40
Fig.45	<i>Long Haired Hare</i> (©1949 Warner Bros.)	41
Fig.46	The Elite 7 now consisted of seven athletes in addition to the four professors	42
Fig.47	The Professors were based on myself and my wife as well as two Professors from LU who happened to be married	42
Fig.48	Ombus	42
Fig.49	Example of an early Egyptian bowl with feet	42
Fig.50	Eastman	42
Fig.51	Example of a statue from Easter Island	42
Fig.52	Collosius	43
Fig. 53	Example of an Olmec colossal head	43
Fig.54	Finished graphite sketch to be transferred to canvas for the Monticello painting	44
Fig.55	In-progress painting of Monticello	44
Fig.56	In-progress painting of Poplar Forest	44
Fig.57	In-progress painting <i>The Little Red Schoolhouse</i> depicting a schoolhouse in Southern California that is an official state landmark	45
Fig.58	First version of the painting <i>Underwater Exploration</i>	46
Fig.59	Digital version of <i>Underwater Exploration</i>	46
Fig.60	Centaurs "Dancing Fawn" represents the Native American culture	47
Fig.61	Eric Han-Gyong Jin represents the Asian or Far East culture	47
Fig.62	Rollerbots in different colors done with pen and ink and airbrush on illustration board	47
Fig.63	Two ideations of Larry, who represents athletes in the Special Olympics	48
Fig.64	Professor Phillips resembled Velma from <i>Scooby-Doo</i>	48
Fig.65	Thadius resembled the character from the movie <i>Joe Dirt</i>	48
Fig.66	Thadius updated	48

Fig.67	Thadius the Viking	48
Fig.68	Michaela's hair and facial features needed to be updated	49
Fig.69	Modernized line drawing version of Michaela	49
Fig.70	Another version of Monaco	49
Fig.71	Another version of Michaela	49
Fig.72	Full body portrait of male character Monaco	49
Fig.73	Full body portrait of female character Michaela	49
Fig.74	Male Rollerbot legs on digital painting	49
Fig.75	Female Rollerbot legs on digital painting	49
Fig.76	Creating the large spheres for the head and body was a process of trial and error. This photo shows a failed attempt and a successful attempt while creating the first three-foot tall, life-sized Rollerbots	50
Fig.77	The heads of the female Rollerbot, including the masks, hearing pads, antenna button, and bow were nearly completed	50
Fig.78	Once the legs and wheel were attached, a stand was constructed for each so they could be covered in gesso, sanded, then painted	50
Fig.79	Once the bodies were assembled, I still needed to add the legs and wheel to each of them.	50
Fig.80	Early storyboard attempts more closely resembled a shot list (StudioBinder: Storyboard & Shot List)	52
Fig.81	First draft of Storyboard for the first several frames	52
Fig.82	Portion of the script written for the pilot episode of the Rollerbots	53
Fig.83	Screenshot of first animation created on Adobe Animate in 2020	54
Fig.84	Concept sketch of mixed media project consisting of relief and 3D assemblage elements.	54
Fig.85	Digital painting of the Elite 7 group	55
Fig.86	Hand-sculpted lion on a frame constructed of Sculpey.	55
Fig.87	Rollerbot Emotional Chart demonstrates how the Rollerbots will use body movements and positions to indicate different feelings and emotions and expressions	59
Fig.88	Rollerbots examining a pedestrian crossing and trying to determine the meaning of "Ped Xing."	59
Fig.89	(above) Framed painting of Monticello entitled " <i>Bring me a mound of Jell-O, meet me at Monticello . . . Yup! I can see where you got confused.</i> "	61
Fig.90	(left) Close-up of Monticello painting showing Rollerbot AJ7 holding a mound of Jell-O after mis-hearing the instructions "Meet me at Monticello."	61
Fig.91	(above) Framed painting of Monticello entitled " <i>Now I can see why this is a Popular Forest!</i> ". " <i>Uh... that's Poplar my love!</i> "	62
Fig.92	(left) Close-up of Poplar Forest painting showing Rollerbot AJ3 petting the elk and Rollerbot AJ7 noticing the eagle perched above them. Taking all this in, AJ3 responds that she can understand why the place is called "Popular," having mistaken the name of the landmark."	62
Fig.93	<i>Underwater Exploration</i>	63
Fig.94	The Elite Seven Group	64
Fig.95	<i>The Little Red Schoolhouse</i> depicts teachers and students engaged in active learning	79
Fig.96	Close-up of the Schoolhouse painting demonstrates a teacher releasing a model rocket while teaching science as a Rollerbot looks on in amazement. The rocket can be seen shooting past the waving flag and startling the birds as they begin to fly away	80
Fig.97	This close-up of the Schoolhouse painting shows a teacher, children, and Rollerbots on the hill listening to and watching other children and Rollerbots reenact Shakespearean scenes, including a Rollerbot and young girl up in the bell tower possibly reenacting the famous Romeo and Juliet scene.	80
Fig.98	Group of Librarians of Historical Culture & Knowledge	81

Fig.99	Close-up of the life-sized female Rollerbot AJ3 showing her head. The eyelashes are represented on the mask with thin plastic leaves	94
Fig.100	Close-up of the bow on the back of AJ3's head, which was constructed of Worbla over Styrofoam, then painted green, her favorite color	94
Fig.101	The female stickshift is an automatic	95
Fig.102	The male Rollerbot's stickshift is a manual	95
Fig.103	The male Rollerbots' "legs" are blocky and utilitarian	95
Fig.104	The female Rollerbots' "legs" are more smooth and shapely	95
Fig.105	Life-sized Rollerbot statues	96
Fig.106	Life-sized Rollerbots studying the Mona Lisa (replica) trying to decipher why she's such a big deal.	97
Fig.107	Sapphire Palace of Historical Culture and Knowledge	109
Fig.108	Final page of script	117
Fig.109	The model of the Museum with the Sapphire Palace consists of a floor and two walls so that the viewer can easily see all the elements from different angles	119
Fig.110	Rollerbots AJ7 & AJ3 playing their unique sport called Saucerball	120
Fig.111	The unicorn at the top center of the frame represents purity and innocence	121
Fig.112	The owls on either side of the unicorn represent wisdom and knowledge in the darkness.	121
Fig.113	The strawberries at the bottom of the frame represent the perfect fruit of the spirit	121
Fig. 114	Digital painting of the Elite 7 and Professors in frame	122
Fig.115	Roses adorn each frame	123
Fig.116	Digital painting of The Librarians of Historical Culture and Knowledge	123
Fig.117	The Lion on the top of the frame symbolizes courage, boldness, and leadership	123
Fig.118	Rollerbots displayed on a pedestal	124
Fig.119	The original Rollerbots created in 1979	124
Fig.120	The Cup of the Crystal Rose	125
Fig.121	I arranged the grass and flowers in styrofoam pieces that were sunken into the floor so that they surrounded the display pieces	125
Fig.122	Ornate columns and pillars were created from wood and Sculpey clay and painted to resemble marble	125

All CBS Productions, Cartoon Network, Disney, Disney Netflix, Fox Broadcasting Services, Geffen Productions, LucasFilm, MGM Productions, MTV, NBC, NBC Universal, Nickelodeon, PBS, Rankin/Bass and Motown Productions, Touchstone Pictures, Universal Pictures, and Warner Brothers still shots or marketing material are copyrighted material owned by their respective companies and are published as fair use for educational purposes only as provided in section 107 of the Copyright Act.

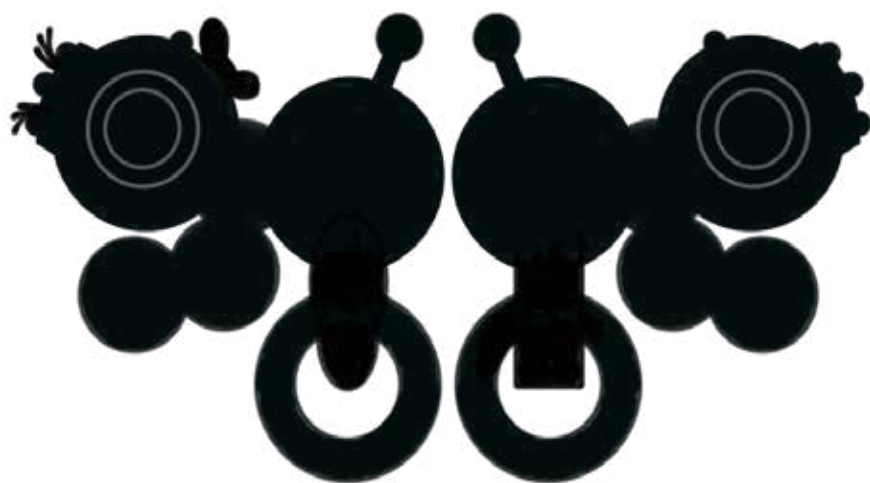
Fair use is a legal doctrine that promotes freedom of expression by permitting the unlicensed use of copyright-protected works in certain circumstances. Section 107 of the Copyright Act

Abstract

This study examines the degradation of ethical, academic, and moral subject matter that has been increasing in animation and children's programming since the 1980s. Prior to that time, cartoons were infused with silly humor, clean jokes, age-appropriate subject matter, and traditional values and morals. However, over the last forty years, cartoons are now including graphic violence and sexual innuendos while promoting the acceptance and tolerance of rebellious behavior, inappropriate language, and crude jokes. Within the last 10 years children's programming has begun mainstreaming the LGBTQ+ lifestyle while steering away from or even attacking traditional Christian beliefs, principles, and values.

Christian animation such as the popular 1950s and 1960s television program *Davey and Goliath* and the 1990s program *VeggieTales* deal with subject matter directly from Biblical stories and Scripture. Although these programs illustrate stories and morals from Scripture, they do not portray typical everyday subjects or situations to which non-religious children or families can relate. Although *Davey and Goliath* did deal with a little boy's questions and dilemmas, they did this within the format of a Biblical setting. Unfortunately, by their very nature as Christian or religious programs, the format and subject matter of *Davey and Goliath* and *VeggieTales* generally has not engaged groups of non-believers, atheists, agnostics, and secular educators and scientists.

This study presents the researcher's characters, the Rollerbots, the Elite 7, and the Librarians of Historical Culture and Knowledge as a viable alternative for the future of animation. A cartoon featuring these characters would fill this void and work together to address these secular worldview issues and situations, not only from a child's viewpoint but those of an adolescent and adult as well. Topics and information will be brought forth with scholarly answers to questions from a Christian worldview allowing the truth and principles of the Scriptures to penetrate young hearts and minds without the overtly religious overtone that may alienate non-religious viewers.



Chapter 1

Introduction

Purpose of Study

The cartoon and animation industries have undergone dramatic changes over the past sixty years, as will be outlined in my literature review. In its earliest stages, it began with a frame-by-frame animation and then moved to stop motion Claymation. There has even been an amalgamation of stop motion animation in combination with live motion picture production, the first occurring in 1933 with the classic motion picture *King Kong*. In the last 20 years, another leap has been made with computer-generated imagery (CGI). This animation has blurred the line between man-made graphics and reality. The first in this media was the 1993 motion picture *Jurassic Park*.

While movie animation has taken a dramatic leap into technology, the research will suggest that much of the children's television animation programming has moved in another direction. They have moved to shows illustrated in what the researcher would describe as rudimentary illustrations with shows such as *Beavis and Butthead*, *Ren & Stimpy*, and even *Rugrats*. This

degradation goes beyond the artistic choices, however, and also includes a degradation of morals and ethics being portrayed by cartoons and television shows aimed toward young children. Many shows now include graphic violence, sexual innuendos, and provocative jokes.

Although Warner Brothers' cartoons of the 1940s and 1950s depicted violence such as anvils dropping, characters falling off cliffs, bombs exploding, and guns going off in characters' faces, it was clearly intended to be interpreted in a humorous way as opposed to the more graphic depiction seen in today's cartoons. In much the same way, moral topics such as homosexuality, transgenderism, rebellion, and self-independence established by rejection of authority figures and parents are being infused into today's animation, which is strongly influencing today's youth.

While cartoons of the 50s, 60s, and 70s infused educational material and traditional values within the storylines, children's programming today not only has eliminated that but is actively promoting anti-Biblical beliefs. Studies will be

presented that indicate that children will mimic what they see in animated television shows. This research will show the moral decline of cartoons and animation over the past four decades and the influence this has had on the youth. With this degradation, this has left a void of children's programming that promotes traditional, Biblical principles and values. Throughout this study, my purpose will be to not only find the areas that are lacking but to develop characters and storylines that can address these needs.

Research Questions

Like many adults, I associate much of my early childhood memories with cartoons and animated movies. Over the years I have been dismayed by what I have considered to be a degradation of cartoons and animation that are being viewed by school-aged children. I have fond memories of not only being entertained by cartoons but also learning new vocabulary words and even social skills and principles.

As I began to conduct research into this issue, I was guided by five essential questions:

How has animation evolved over the last five decades?

How have animation and television shows affected children in each of the last five decades?

How has the moral decadence been infused subliminally into animation?

How can a Christian message be applied to an animated program?

How can animation be used as a learning tool in a fun, humorous, and imaginative way?

Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, the term "cartoon(s)" refers to an animated character or a program or movie consisting of animated characters, and the term "shorts" refers to an animated movie that is forty minutes or less so as not to be considered a featured film. Cartoons and animation are generally regarded as being appealing to young children. It is reasonable to assume that we are all affected by things we see and hear. This research, however, will further examine to what extent this is true with regard to young children.

In this age of technology, it is assumed that children spend a large amount of time in front of screens. In 2009, the Nielson Company reported that children aged 2 to 8 spent roughly 28 to 32 hours per week watching TV. As technology has advanced, watching TV can be interpreted as watching shows not just on a television set but streaming on smart devices, as well. While this is a reality, it is also assumed that children spending large amounts of sedentary time in front of screens has detrimental effects. However, this is not the focus of the research being conducted.

Bias

My primary bias is that I am an artist who had begun developing cartoon characters called The Rollerbots in 1979 and continued to develop them until I graduated from college in 1996. I grew up watching and enjoying the Looney Tunes shows and characters developed by

Chuck Jones. While this research will include an indepth look at Chuck Jones and Warner Brothers cartoons and characters, there must also be an objective study of those programs that have emerged since that time and their effects on children.

Limitations

The limitations of this study include the logistical impossibility of researching and creating a study group for every cartoon that has been produced in the last forty years. To realize a completed animation is beyond the scope of this Thesis, but it will entail an historical analysis of the field, its evolution from innocence to crude and even anti-Christian themes, a brief study of the art and technology of animation, the hazardous material often included and its effects on children, as well as alternate models to consider. While the main theme of this thesis will be related to animation, the researcher's deliverables will concentrate on developing the characters and storylines for a proposed series of animation shows.

Methodology and Scope

I used a combination of secondary quantitative and qualitative research methodologies of my study relying on an extensive literature review guided by my research questions. I began by examining the beginning of animation and tracing its history and evolution through the decades from the early 1900s to the present. I utilized prior studies conducted throughout

the decades regarding the effect of television programs and cartoons on viewers, especially young children.

Not surprisingly, the research that follows does indeed indicate a link between a child's behavior and the shows or cartoons they watch. The television cartoons and shows researched also indicate not only a degradation in the artistic value of many shows but also in the values, or lack thereof, that are being not only subliminally infused but even blatantly expressed. Because the majority of television shows or cartoons that are available are having a negative impact on the youth, this would indicate a need for a positive animation program.

The deliverables produced with this study will demonstrate how the Rollerbots, The Elite 7, and Librarians of Historical Culture and Knowledge can be produced as an animated television show increasing the integrity of animation not only on an artistic level but subject matter and moral level as well. This would include a variety of academic topics, athletics, and the arts as well as an integration of ethical and moral conduct on a secular television network.

My characters will be introduced as an alternative to the current programing aimed at young children. As characters in an animated show, they will be designed to have a positive impact on children's animated television viewing that would go beyond mere entertainment and would have a subliminal Christian message while still remaining appealing to secular audiences.

Summary

In this first chapter, I have introduced and outlined the topic of this study as it relates to children's animation programs. In the second chapter, I will present and analyze the relevant literature and studies that were guided by my five research questions. In the third chapter, I will present the Visual Process of the creation of my deliverables. The fourth chapter will showcase my finished deliverables as my Visual Solution.



Chapter 2

Literature Review

Historians generally regard the animated film released in 1906 by J. Stuart Blackton, entitled *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces*, as the first animated movie. In 1908, Emile Cohl created the first animated short film entitled *Fantasmagorie*. Very primitive by today's standards, it was considered entertaining and groundbreaking in the early 1900s. Winsor McCay created the first animated character named *Gertie the Dinosaur* (Fig. 1) in 1914 (Nusair).

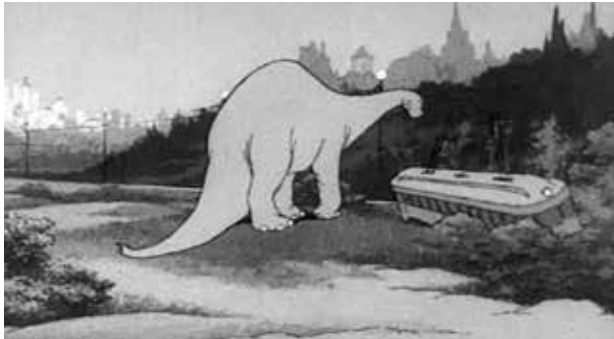


Fig.1 Screenshot of Winsor McCay's *Gertie the Dinosaur* (©1914 Disney).

The first feature-length animated film, Quirino Cristiani's *El Apostol*, was released in 1917, but unfortunately the only known copy was destroyed in a fire. Then in 1919, Felix the Cat made his debut and became the first famous

animated cartoon character. In 1937, Walt Disney created the first animated motion picture masterpiece *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Fig. 2). Even today, artists, animators, and historians alike consider this the quintessential animated motion picture ever made (Nusair).



Fig.2 *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (©1937 Disney)

In the spring of 1939, the first cartoon appeared on a then “novelty item” called the television. On May 19 of that year, Walt Disney created a cartoon short called *Donald's Cousin Gus*. It appeared on NBC's experimental station W2XBS, known today as WNBC New York. The first running television cartoon premiered in 1949; it was called *Crusader Rabbit* and was created and developed by Jay Ward, creator of the *Rocky and Bullwinkle Show* (Nusair).

Chuck Jones' name is as synonymous with animation as that of Walt Disney.

The Art and Influence of Chuck Jones

“To the general public, Chuck Jones’s name is as synonymous with animation as that of Walt Disney. In a career spanning more than sixty years, Jones extended the parameters of the indigenous American art form known as ‘character,’ or ‘personality,’ animation. He won numerous international awards, including four Academy Awards, one of which was for lifetime achievement, a Smithsonian 150th Anniversary Medal of Achievement, and the Edward MacDowell Medal, a national award given annually for outstanding contributions to the arts” (“Charles Martin Jones”).

When Bugs Bunny was developed in the 1940s, he was the opposite of Mickey Mouse. Bugs was everything Mickey was not. Bugs was not just a crash rabbit; people were after him. Another

point was that when Bugs went on a mission, he set out to complete it. He would take only so much before he would say the much-anticipated line “of course you know, this means war,” which again would lead to the storyline and stunts. Within the Bugs Bunny world, Daffy Duck was the opposite of Bugs. Bugs was the winner while Daffy was the loser, just as when Mickey Mouse was the winner, Donald Duck became the loser within the storyline.

The difference between Daffy and Donald was that Donald Duck’s storyline employed polite humor while Daffy was more vaudeville. Chuck Jones related to Daffy because he saw himself as Daffy (“Charles Martin Jones”). He dreamed like Bugs but, in reality, was Daffy Duck. In many ways I think we are all like that.

What made these cartoons effective was Jones’ direction. On the storyboards, Jones would illustrate the point of interest, and the

Of course you know, this means war!

--Bugs Bunny



Fig.3 Warner Brothers Merrie Melodies’ character Bugs Bunny (©1960) was directed by Chuck Jones

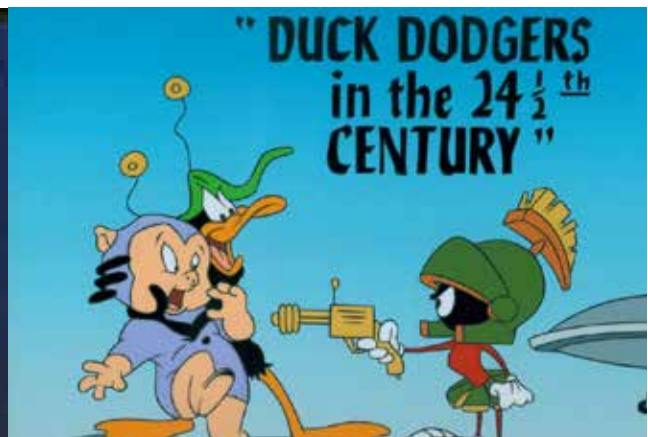


Fig.4 Chuck Jones also directed this Merrie Melodies’ cartoon entitled *Duck Dodgers in the 24 1/2th Century* (©1953 Warner Brothers)

animation artists would illustrate the story. Another effective use was the background artist. Chuck would allow the background artist to do as he wished as long as it did not interfere with the movement of the character, such as in *Duck Dodgers in the 24 ½th Century* (Fig.4) The background artist added the evaporator stations and the huge eye that follows Daffy Duck, which not only did not interfere with the animation of the character but added to the show.

The influence of Chuck Jones cannot be overstated. He summed up his goal by stating, “I don’t want something that’s realistic . . . I want something that’s believable” (Chuck Jones: Extremes and In-Betweens - A Life in Animation). Robin Williams spoke about him in this way, “The greatest thing for me was backstage at the [63rd] Academy Awards, when he [Chuck Jones] got his lifetime achievement award, he was backstage talking to all these journalists and he was talking about animation and was comparing it to classic Greek drama, and he said, you know the classic hero . . . and then he said ‘but with the coyote he is basically the classic hero raging against the gods, but somehow still finding another anvil’” (Chuck Jones).

Chuck Jones was the master of subject development and innovative thinking of subject matter as well as intelligent and intellectual plots. But this goes even to the finest detail of his work. Another example of Jones’ trademark is the use of eyes in the characters he develops. When looking at the character’s eyes you can see there is a thought going through the character’s

mind. This is extremely prevalent in two of Jones’ characters: Wile E. Coyote (Fig. 5) and the Grinch (Fig. 6). This occurs in the famous *Road Runner and Coyote* cartoons when the coyote comes up with a diabolical idea to capture the road runner, and with the Grinch when he discovers a way to keep Christmas from coming to Whoville.



Fig.5 Wile E. Coyote and the Roadrunner from the original cartoon *The Road Runner Show* (©1966-1973 Warner Brothers) created by Chuck Jones.



Fig.6 Dr. Seuss’ *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (©1966 CBS) is an animated special directed by Chuck Jones.

Another masterful move in Chuck Jones’ direction was timing (Chuck Jones). He was known to have said,

“The difference between a laugh and flop can be one frame.”

This observation can tell you just how precise Jones was in his timing considering that it takes fourteen frames of film to make one second of animation. With this one-two combination of timing and eye expression, his animated characters became more believable than ever.

What made Chuck Jones' animation effective was not just the actual joke, stunt, or action of the event, but the pause and expression of the character that was going to be subjected to the joke. (Chuck Jones). For example, when we see the coyote in a cloud of smoke and the roadrunner has stopped and looked at the coyote with a smile, it is at that fleeting moment that the coyote realizes that something is horrifically wrong. This ultimately leads to the fall, blast, and dropping of an object onto the coyote.

However, Jones still had a third skill he used in his work: the mastery of smear animation. This was effective in creating a stretch or fast action sequence. This worked by placing a figure in one position, moving them into another position, and then smearing the image and even, in some cases, placing two heads in the same smear (Fig. 7). This was called short cutting.

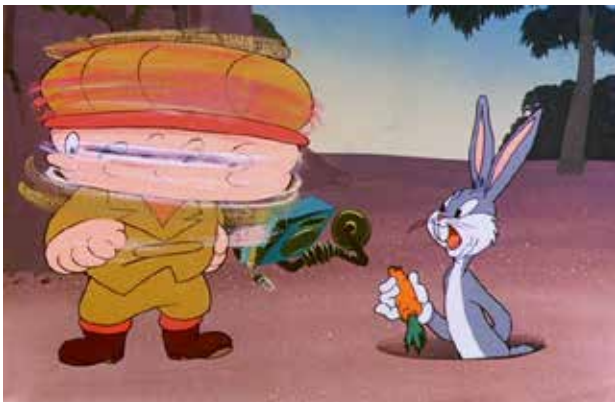


Fig.7 Example of the smear technique from *Hare Do* (©1949 Warner Bros.)

Today it an accepted use of stylized animation, and this was perfected by Jones. In effect it reduced the amount of work and color cells that were needed in order to meet the timeline and budget for the animation development.

Jones' grew up in a time of silent pictures, which had a direct effect upon his animation timing. Much of this type of motion picture style was very flamboyant and exaggerated, which is observed in many of his works such as the *Scarlet Pumpernickel* (Fig. 8). Because of these masterful skills, Chuck Jones not only was able to make characters come to life, but he created them with depth and layers of humor. Animation today has lost the skills and clever ingenuity that make Chuck Jones' animation so humorous and intelligent.



Fig.8 *The Scarlet Pumpernickel* (© 1950 Warner Bros.) directed by Chuck Jones

Animation Evolving Through the Decades

In the 1940s during the Second World War, animation was used as a propaganda tool for the American viewer in cartoon shorts in the theater. In many cases they were used not

only to entertain the American adult but also to entertain the youth of that generational period (Simensky). Warner Brothers used Bugs Bunny as a soldier in boot camp (Fig. 9) to give levity to the serious condition of the war raging throughout the world. In these cartoon shorts, guns going off in the faces of cartoon characters and bombs exploding were accepted as comedy and relief from the pressures of life.



Fig.9 *Forward March Hare* is a Looney Tunes cartoon directed by Chuck Jones featuring Bugs Bunny. (©1953 Warner Bros.)

With the advent of the television in the 1940s and 50s, people began to stop going to movie theaters for information on the newsreels that appeared on the big screen. Along with these newsreels were the short cartoons that accompanied them. In the late 50s, costs began to rise to the point that it was no longer becoming cost effective for the studios. Walt Disney began to curtail his development of the short cartoon as it was becoming too costly to continue in this direction; thus, many cartoonists began to leave for the commercial arts, advertising, or television commercials that required animation in their work.

The Post-War era decade of the 1950s usually had humor dealing with the everyday life

of Americana. One such cartoon was the Warner Brothers episode entitled *Feed the Kitty* featuring an oversized bulldog named Bartholomew who falls in love with a stray kitten. He is doing all that he can to keep the kitten away from the homemaker to prevent the kitten from being sent away. Warner Brothers made several other animated stories that had parodies as well as humorous subject matter including *The Rabbit of Seville* and *Dough for the Do-Do*. *Dough for the Do-Do* delved into issues of uncharted territories in Africa during a time when the furthest parts into the continent had yet to be discovered (Fig. 10). Still Warner Brothers went even further to entertain by doing characterizations of celebrities such as Frank Sinatra, Fred Astaire, Betty Davis, Betty Grable, and even Laurel and Hardy, the Three Stooges, and Jimmy Durante.



Fig.10 The Merrie Melodies cartoon *Dough for the Do-Do* (©1949 Warner Bros.)

Television programmers began to acquire or produce kids' cartooning for Saturday mornings or after-school programing; however, it still was not cost effective. Joe Barbera wrote in his book, *My Life in 'Toons: From Flatbush to Bedrock in Under a Century* (1994), that in 1957 a budget for a Tom and Jerry cartoon in theaters cost between \$40,000 to \$60,000, with about 20,000 to 30,000 drawings. Screen Gems was offering a meager \$2,700 and used only about 3,000 drawings for the show at about five minutes in length. These shortcuts had a major impact on the quality of the show. Hanna-Barbera worked on the quantity and speed over the quality. The direction of cartoons was also changing, and animators began focusing more on the characters. Rather than being just funny, they now added gags and more character development. Writers were now thinking of plot and direction rather than that of the development of the character. This now led to less interaction within the artists, writers, and developers, and now each department was working as an independent work force.

In the 1960s, the subject matter of animated cartoons changed again, this time dealing with the subliminal message of the Cold War of the United States and Soviet Union, as well as the space race to the moon. This was evident in Warner Brothers cartoon *Duck Dodgers in the 24½th Century*. Hanna-Barbera Studios also gained fame in the 1960s with *Tom and Jerry*, based more on slapstick comedy of the 1930s. The studio also had great success with *The Flintstones* (Fig. 11). This format was similar to that of the 1950's television show *The*

Honeymooners; however, it was infused with more humor and less friction between Fred and Wilma.



Fig.11 *The Flintstones* (©1960-66 Hanna-Barbera Productions) was the first animated series to hold a prime-time slot on television.

The 1970s ushered in a new version of cartoons dealing with a superhero theme. Cartoons such as the *Justice League*, *Superman and Friends*, and *Space Ghost* were popular with kids. Another twist on animation was introducing primetime shows, entertainers, and sports personalities into animated Saturday morning cartoons, such as in *Jackson Five* (Fig. 12), *Harlem Globe Trotters* (Fig. 13), and *Star Trek*.

During the 1980s we began to see a change in values in our society. With the development of technology, the stock market began to change, which meant that for the first time in history you could buy a stock that had no monetary value. This was the beginning of the search engine companies, as well. Although many of these companies failed, several of these companies, such as Google, Yahoo, and America Online launched many people into instant fortune. With this instant gratification and fortune, the attitude of the baby boomer generation of the 1960s changed, and this affected the babies of the 1970s.



Fig.12 *Jackson 5* (©1971-73) was an ABC series produced by Rankin/Bass and Motown Productions.

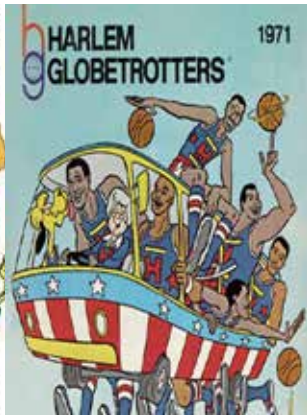


Fig.13 *The Harlem Globetrotters* (©1970-71) was produced by Hanna-Barbera and CBS Productions

Television was changing in the 1980s, and a new line of entertainment made its premiere in the early 80s called “music television.” The network was called MTV, and it was followed by VH-1 and later Pop up video. MTV success was not only focused on producing music videos; the company also branched out into other areas, including news information aimed directly at the youth. This “news” was promoting a biased, liberal message to the youth and subliminally informing them that it was acceptable to rebel against the status quo.

In the late 80s and early 90s, cable stations became much more of a force against those of the major networks of ABC, CBS, and NBC. As cable stations grew larger, there was a demand on their part to develop original productions. Television programing was taking a new turn. Cable companies were now hiring younger employees. New diverse styles in radio, art, television, as well as publishing began to emerge. The baby boomers of the early and late 1960s were coming of age and showing some

rebellion as well (Simensky). The philosophy of the 60s included: “Do what feels good”; “If you can dream it, you can become it”; “Be your own boss”; “Don’t let ‘The Man’ tell you what to do.” These attitudes became evident in animation as well. Cartoon executives were becoming younger and more rebellious against the so-called “establishment.” The sloppy casual dress of the hippy era of the 1960s was now becoming mainstream in executive boardrooms. T-shirts, cut off shorts, and flip-flops accompanied by a lack of respect of authority was obvious.

In 1988, Robert Zemeckis released *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. This, in essence, revived the old Warner Brothers and Disney cartoon characters. and effectively bridged the generation gap of cartoons. Although a combination of animation and motion picture was not new, this movie was innovative in that computer technology was heavily used not only in amalgamation of motion picture and animation but also in the

use of the animated characters, which created a much more three-dimensional effect. The movie also introduced the sexy symbol cartoon character Jessica Rabbit who famously says,

***“I’m not bad,
I’m just drawn
that way.”***



Fig.14 Movie poster for *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (©1988 Touchstone Pictures)

Pee-wee's Play House was also a new concept of animation, again using real live action as well as puppets and animation with a retro feel. This was becoming more effective with a new, younger audience. In primetime television, the *Tracy Ullman Show* began to infuse animation between acts. The cartoons developed by Matt Groening were picked up by 20th Century Fox and became a primetime success known as *The Simpsons* (Fig. 15). *Futurama*, a spin off from *The Simpsons*, also became a primetime animated show that was first shown on Fox then was shown on Comedy Central. Around this same time, MTV began using animation in its music videos and began integrating more adult subject matter.



Fig.15 *The Simpsons* is the longest running TV scripted TV series (©1988 Fox Broadcasting Company).

No longer was television animation dealing with funny lines and practical jokes. Now the subject was becoming subliminally sexual and included connotations regarding drugs and partying.

MTV even took their message to the animation circuit by producing their own adult cartoon programing showcasing animation shorts called *Liquid Television*. The cartoons' demographics were directed to adults of the baby boomer age. The subject matter was very adult-oriented, and to justify this, MTV added a disclaimer that this was not geared toward children. (Simensky).

A few of these shorts went on to become successful shows, such as *Beavis and Butt-head*. This show was about two teen boys that were outcasts of society and sexually aroused by anything and everything that resembled the female sex organs. They relished in the success of destruction of property, disregarded any type of authority, rebelled against any kind of structure, and encouraged others to follow their lead. *Beavis and Butt-head* was also illustrated with a very archaic and immature artistic style reminiscent of elementary school drawings (Fig. 16).

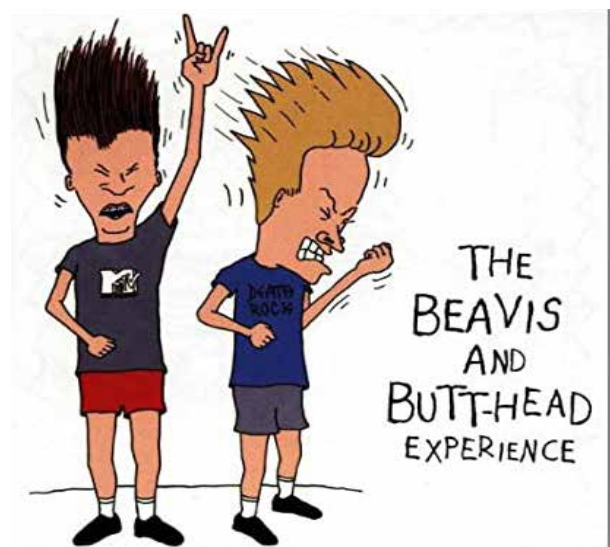


Fig.16 *Beavis & Butt-Head Experience* is a comedy album that was released in 1993 by Geffen Records based on the characters from the MTV animated series.

This began the generation of cartoons where the subject matter now revolved around rebelling against authority and any rules of structure and leadership (Simensky).

Following the success of *Beavis and Butthead*, on MTV, Nickelodeon went on to produce more adult-oriented cartoons, such as *The Head* and *The Maxx* (Fig. 17). These shows fell under their programs called Oddities (Fig. 18). *The Maxx* features a young social worker named Julie Winters, who is scantily clad and overtly sexual and reminiscent of Jessica Rabbit. The premise of the story deals with the highly sensitive subject of the rape and beating of Julie.



Fig.17 *The Maxx* (©1995) was an MTV series based on the graphic novels of Sam Kieth.

While MTV was gearing these cartoons toward their adult audience, the danger was and still is



Fig.18 MTV created the label Oddities to showcase shows like *The Maxx* and *The Head*.

that these cartoons and the channel is appealing and available to young children who are not equipped to filter these adult themes.

In the 1990s, the cartoon networks that had begun by airing the classic cartoons such as *Bugs Bunny*, *Porky Pig*, *Daffy Duck*, and *Foghorn Leghorn* now discontinued these shows. Ironically, it was not because of the violence of the shows but because they felt they were “outdated” and lacked the interest that the children of that day wanted to view. Nickelodeon’s answer to MTV’s *Beavis and Butthead* was a show about a psychotic chihuahua named Ren and a fat, dimwitted cat named Stimpson, who went by the nickname Stimpy. *Ren & Stimpy* (Fig 19) chronicled the duos’ often gross and bizarre adventures. This show as well as other Nickelodeon shows such as *Sponge Bob Square Pants* and *Rugrats* (Fig. 20), whose illustrations were very rudimentary and unattractive, began to increase in popularity and rise to the top.

Soon a new wave of cartoons emerged, some

having a simple superhero-like storyline, such as *Dexter's Laboratory* and the *Powerpuff Girls*. These shows took a lighthearted look at the superhero images by showing young children saving the world (Simensky). While this was more lighthearted and not blatantly anti-authority, the kids were in control and given more freedom without supervision.

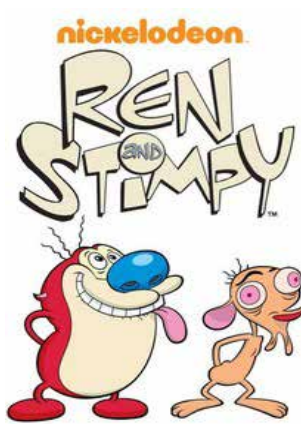


Fig.19 *Ren & Stimpy* aired on Nickelodeon (©1991-1996)

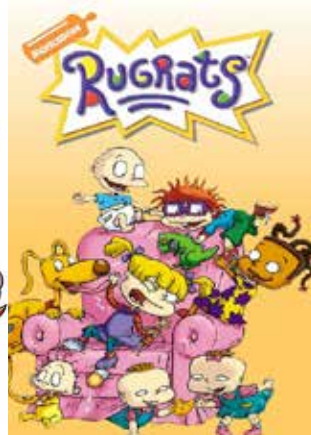


Fig.20 *Rugrats* aired on Nickelodeon (©1991-2004)

In the last twenty years, from 2000 until today, the subject matter of animation has taken a strong political and moral message to the children like never before. This only increased when the Supreme Court of the United States declared that same sex marriage was legal and must be recognized by all states. In this instance, the Supreme Court had overstepped its bounds because, according to the Constitution of the United States (Art. I, clause 1 and Art. VI, clause 2), only Congress can make laws. However, many states began to heed this supposed edict, which opened the doors of acceptance of homosexuality, including the forced acceptance to individuals who do not recognize same sex

marriage as a moral or ethical institution. The reasoning behind this was that "love" is open to all and has no limits. The belief is that those of same sex can raise a healthy child in society with no ill effects or mental or emotional damage. These are issues that are now being infused in the animation of children's television as the world shifts further and further away from the Biblical principles upon which it was founded.

A good example of the Supreme Court's decision to legalize same sex marriage is the very popular cartoon *Steven Universe* in which the issues are addressed in a way that justifies homosexuality. On one planet there is only one gender: female; thus, love is recognized as merely loving one another (Fig. 21).



Fig.21 Two scenes from *Steven Universe* (©2013-2020 Cartoon Network) depicting a same-sex wedding ceremony followed by a kiss between two lesbians.

Since there is no opposite sex, it justifies loving the same sex (Swartz). Another example is how the protagonist is struggling with another character who seems to love him (Zane). The show is developed by an openly practicing bisexual named Rebecca Sugar and is working at promoting the gay agenda to children and addressing it as not a moral issue but a way of life through animation.

In 2016, at a San Diego Comic-Con, Sugar openly stated that the program was based on her own experience as a bisexual woman and a member of the LGBT community. In an interview with NPR in 2018, she stated that her characters the Gems are “Non-binary” and express themselves as she does in her own life (Zane). Sugar at first cleverly delivered this subliminal message to children; however, it soon became more blatant. In an interview in 2019, Sugar said that she had to battle for years to include a lesbian wedding in her show even though it has been censored in many countries. She wanted to be able to reach the children who felt “alienated” by gender stereotypes in traditional cartoons as she herself had felt alienated (Savage). Sugar lamented the fact that even though some cartoons aimed at teens and adults, such as *The Simpsons* and *Family Guy*, had included LGBT+ characters since the mid 2000s, it took much longer to reach the children’s shows. Since *Steven Universe* aired in 2013, other children shows have included LGBT+ characters as well, such as *Adventure Time* (Fig. 22) and *Arthur* (Fig. 23). Sugar went on to say that they had been held to “standards of extremely bigoted



Fig.22 *Adventure Time* finale showed a kiss between gay characters Princess Bubblegum and Marceline the vampire. (©2010-2018 Cartoon Network)



Fig.23 Mr. Ratburn from the kids' show *Arthur* came out as gay and was married to another male character in the 22nd season's premiere (©2019 PBS)

countries,” and that “[t]here are people who see what we’re doing as insidious and . . . they’re ignorant.” She also stated, “So much bigotry is based on the idea that (LGBT+content) is something inherently adult, which is entirely false (Savage).”

Today the animation industry has shifted even further away from traditional values. It

is so comprehensive that the makers of Steven Universe sell LGBT-themed merchandise. Sugar said, “Right now what is so critical is just that queer youth understand adults in the world know they exist, appreciate they exist” (Savage). She went on to say, “I really hope the show is a stepping stone to action and to the ability to find one another” Sugar also stated that despite the progress that has been made in the media as well as the legalization of same sex marriage that LGBT+rights were under threat globally (Savage).

This is such a sad commentary on our culture at present. As a nation, and across the world, we have moved so far away from the truths of God’s Word. Kids who enjoy watching Sugar’s show see nothing wrong with the program. They only see that the animation is so well done, and the message is very innocent. Not surprisingly, many adults see no problem with the show and feel it is a great form of entertainment for their children. This is just another example of how animation has changed drastically in subject matter. In no other time in animation history has animation been this overtly and blatantly used to push the liberal and anti-Biblical agenda with a lack of Christian principles and morals to the children of today.

Art & Technology

Technology has changed so much in the last 50 years since I first pursued the path of becoming a professional artist. Today’s phone has more technology than what was on the Apollo 11 capsule that landed men on the moon

in 1969. When Star Trek made its premiere on September 8, 1966, the technology on that show was far beyond anyone’s imagination. There were communication devices that could talk to someone in space at the flip of a wrist and computers that had television capabilities that could talk and dispense information at the touch of a button. This was supposed to happen in the 23rd Century. Yet, here we are in the early 21st Century with just about every technological advancement that was hinted at in that 1966 science fiction television show.

These technological advancements have impacted every area of our lives, and Art is no exception. In fact, there has never been a time in history where art and technology have amalgamated to the degree it has today. It has impacted illustration and design as well as animation. When animation was first developed in the late 19th Century and early 20th Century, it was being done with a flip-book style of development using cellulose acetate film ink on the front and paint on the back, also known as cel animation (Fig. 24).

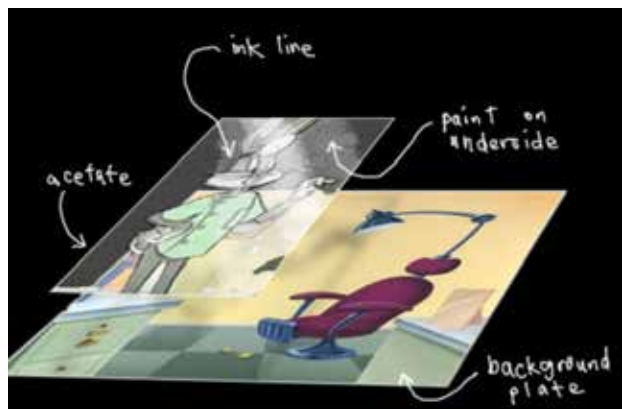


Fig.24 Example of cel animation found at <https://www.timetoast.com/timelines/history-of-animation--69>

This changed in the late 20th century with the advent of computer technology beginning with Disney's animated picture *The Lion King* in 1994. I can remember this movie being advertised and marketed as utilizing ground-breaking technology. It was the first time that the use of depth of field was implemented in an animated motion picture. Not only did depth of field give the picture more life, it made the main characters become much more three dimensional in the story. The following year would be the biggest leap in animated motion pictures and would change the look of cartoons forever.

In 1995, Pixar premiered *Toy Story* (Fig. 25), which was to animation what *Star Wars* was to motion picture special effects. *Toy Story* used specific computer software that created a three-dimensional illustration that made the characters come to life. Soon Pixar followed up with *Toy Story 2*, *3* and *4*. DreamWorks Animation soon jumped on the bandwagon with their fairytale spin-off called *Shrek* (2001) followed by *Shrek 2* (2004) *Shrek the Third* (2007) and finally *Shrek Forever After* (2010). All these animated motion pictures made cel animation, or as many young artists call it “old school animation”, archaic and outdated.

Today, animation has become even more realistic than ever. As mentioned earlier, Universal Studio Pictures' movie *Jurassic Park* was ground-breaking in that the dinosaurs were completely animated by computer software rather than through stop-motion animation. It blurred the line between realism and animation.

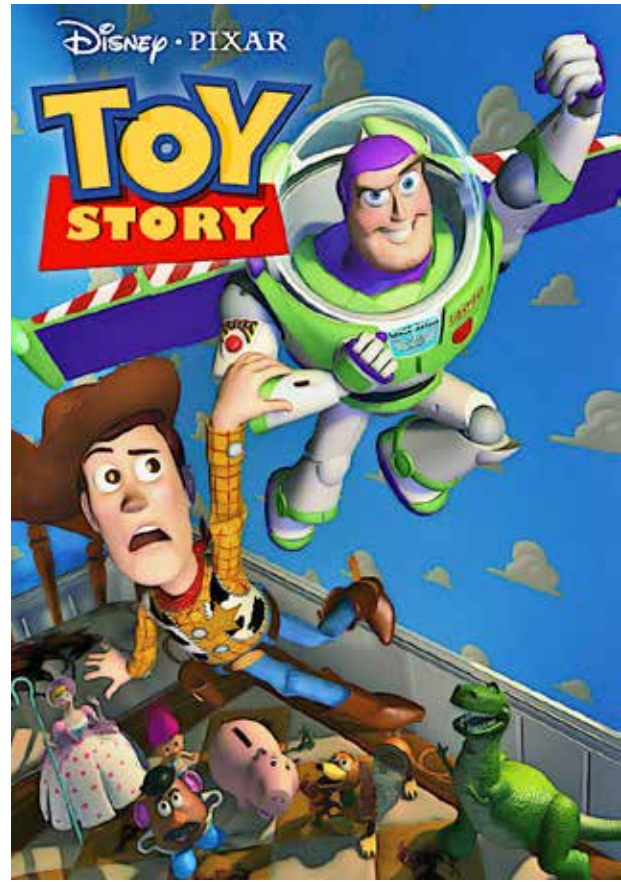


Fig.25 Movie poster for Disney Pixar's *Toy Story* (©1995).

The *Star Wars* franchise has capitalized on this technology. This was seen in *Rogue One* (December 16, 2016) when Carrie Fisher's character turned toward the camera, and it was her at age 19 (Fig. 26) when the original motion picture *Star Wars: A New Hope* was made in 1977. However, Fisher was 58 at that time. A year later in the motion picture, *The Last Jedi*, Peter Cushing was portrayed as Grand Moff Tarkin, as he had been in the original *Star Wars* in 1977, although Cushing had passed away in 1994. Due to the advancement of computer software, he reappeared as the character he played in 1977 as a completely animated actor.

Animation has become even easier with the

advancement of personal computers, laptops, iPads, etc. With software such as Adobe Sketch, ProCreate, Photoshop, Illustrator, Sparks and now Animate, the artist has nearly unlimited potential for creating. Animation will continue to blur the line between reality and fantasy, as can be seen in the latest franchise series of *Harry Potter*. It is my prognostication that within the next decade, animation will become so advanced that actors and actresses will just be figments of our imagination as well as classic actors that have passed on years ago, and we will be none the wiser.



Fig.26 Animated image of Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher) in *Star Wars: Rogue One* (©1995 Lucasfilm and Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures)

Violence in Television

There has been much debate on whether the violence on television is leading to the increase in violence in our society, or if television is merely a reflection of what is occurring in society. In 1954 Senator Estes Kefauver, Chairman of the Senate subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, held a hearing on whether television violence was connected to real-life violence in the United

States. Executives claimed that there was not enough research to make a valid conclusion regarding this issue. There were three reasons at the time, and the executives had compelling arguments in their defense.

The first reason was that television was still a novelty and had not been infused into the household, as had the radio. At that time, television was an expensive luxury for any home; therefore, the availability of television was limited to the upper and middle-class families and usually families of a higher educational background. Secondly, television programming was still young and mostly consisted of variety shows and situation comedy shows. And finally, television programming was only available at a limited time as primetime was not fully developed to the extent we have today (Strasburger, & Wilson). However, much has changed over the last several decades, which leaves those reasons obsolete.

With regard to violence in society, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2013) reported that the arrest rate for aggravated assault was at the lowest point since the early 1980s and the arrest rate for forcible rape in 2010 was one-third of its 1991 peak, (United States Department of Justice, 2013). “Yet the recent mass shootings in Tucson, Aurora, and Newtown have raised new concerns about a culture of violence in the United States” (Strasburger & Wilson, 136). Despite some downward trends in these statistics, there are still even more alarming statistics regarding violence:

- “In 2010, there were nearly 1,000 murders in the United States involving known juvenile offenders” (Strasburger & Wilson, 136). “According to the World Health Organization, the United States juvenile murder rate is the third highest in the world and the highest in the Western world” (World Health Organization, 2002 as quoted in Strasburger & Wilson, 136).
- “Homicide is the second leading cause of death around 10 to 24 year olds in the United States” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2010 as quoted in Strasburger & Wilson, 136).
- “In 2010, simple assault arrest rates were almost double those in 1980 for nearly all age groups, but especially for teen and young adults” (Strasburger & Wilson, 136).
- “According to the 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) of 15,425 high school students, 33% had been in a fight in the previous year, 5% carried a gun to school in the past month, (this is presumed that the student was not carrying legally) and 20% were bullied in school the previous year” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010 as quoted in Strasburger & Wilson, 137).

Although short-term trends in violence may be debatable, what is clear is that violent crime

has increased dramatically since the advent of television 50 years ago. From 1960 through 1991, the U.S. population increased by 40% but the violent crime rate increased by 500% (Grossman & De Gaetano). Much of the real-world aggression to children will be bullying, cyber bullying, and relational aggression that national statistics do not even record or have yet to be recorded. Today “American television is arguably one of the most violent media landscapes in the world, not to mention how Hollywood glamorizes violence. Early estimates indicate that the average American child or teenager will view 1,000 murders, rapes, and aggravated assaults per year on television alone (Rothenberg, 1975). A later review by the American Psychological Association puts this figure at 10,000 per year—or approximately 200,000 viewings by the time a child graduates from high school (Huston et al., 1992)” (Strasburger & Wilson, 139).

It is now estimated that from 1994 to 1997, over 2,500 hours of content are accessed each year across 23 different channels, including the broadcast networks, many independent broadcast networks, public broadcasting, basic cable, and premium cable (Smith et al., 1998; Wilson et al., 1997, 1998). More than 80% of programs featured on premium cable contained violence, whereas fewer than 20% of programs on public broadcasting did. Researchers also examined how violence is portrayed on

In 2010, there were nearly 1,000 murders in the United States involving known juvenile offenders.

***Violence on television is glamorized
with almost 40% of the violent incidents being perpetrated
by “good” characters.***

television. They were broken down into four different areas of examination:

- Violence on television is glamorized with almost 40% of the violent incidents being perpetrated by “good” characters.
- Violence is sanitized so that the majority of violent incidents do not accurately portray the physical harm or pain to the victim or the victim’s family.
- Violence is often trivialized and 40% associate humor with this violence even though over half of these incidents feature physical aggression that would be fatal in real life.
- Fewer than 5% of these programs emphasize an anti-violent theme. Over the three-year study, fewer than 5% of violent programs featured an anti-violence message (Strasburger & Wilson).

In almost all television programming, violence is not only glamorized but even celebrated in the storyline. Yet television programs and network cooperation seem to contradict themselves in saying that they are against violence and are simply portraying that the “good guy” is defending the righteous, the weak, and the “American Way.” Nevertheless, the message is a mass contradiction especially to the young viewer. What follows are some of the repeated themes that are seen on network television that encourage the learning of aggression:

- Good guys as perpetrators.
- Violence that is celebrated or rewarded.
- Violence that goes unpunished.
- Violence that is portrayed as defensible.
- Violence that results in no serious harm to the victim.
- Violence that is made to look funny.

Young people spend more than seven hours a day with a variety of different media, but despite all of the new media, television predominates even for teenagers. Older children and teens are downloading shows to their computers, smartphones, iPads, and cell phones. “In one national survey, about 60% of young people’s TV viewing is done live via a TV set, but the other 40% is now either time-shifted or viewed online or on mobile devices” (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts as quoted in Strasburger & Wilson, 141).

A correlational study in the 1970s studied a large population of children and teens to determine whether heavy viewers of television violence were more likely to show aggressive behavior. Such studies were partially a response to criticisms: that laboratory experiments might be “too artificial, use ‘play’ measures of aggression, actually condone aggression by having adult experimenters encourage violent viewing, and only measured short term effects” (Freedman, 1984, 1986 as quoted in Strasburger & Wilson). One critic even stated, “Viewing in the laboratory setting is involuntary, public,

choiceless, intense, uncomfortable. and singleminded. Laboratory research has taken the viewing experience and turned it inside out so that the viewer is no longer in charge” (Fowles, as quoted in Strasburger & Wilson). Nevertheless, the correlational studies support the same patterns that have been documented in laboratory experiments further supporting the rationale that viewing violence may lead to more aggressive behavior.

In a separate cross-cultural study, more than 1,000 children were followed in the United States, Australia, Finland, Israel, the Netherlands, and Poland over a three-year period. For every country except Australia, early viewing of television violence was significantly associated with higher subsequent aggressive behavior, even after control for a child’s initial level of aggressiveness. This widespread pattern was found despite the fact that crime rates and television programing differed substantially among the different nations. Furthermore, the pattern was found just as often for girls as for boys in three of the countries, including the United States. Thus, earlier findings that seemed to pinpoint only boys now could be extended to girls as well. Contradicting the earlier 22-year longitudinal study, there was some evidence in this cross-cultural study that early aggression did indicate subsequently higher levels of violent viewing (Huesmann, Lagerepets, & Elon, 1984 as reported in Strasburger & Wilson).

During the 1990s, the United States was shocked by an apparent epidemic of schoolyard shootings, from Columbine to Sandy Hook, in the early 2000 years. A twelve-year-old boy was found guilty of the murder of a six-year-old girl who had seen a WWF move done by Dwayne “the Rock” Johnson. The boy was 180 pounds and the girl just 48 pounds (Clary, 2001 as reported in Strasburger & Wilson). A typical viewer will witness an average of nearly two gun-related violent incidents for every hour he or she watches television. Movies also commonly feature guns. A study of the 100 top-grossing movies between 1995 and 2004 found that 70% contained at least one scene with a firearm. Firearm depictions accounted for 17% of the screen time in these movies, and the majority of movies were rated PG-13 (Binswanger & Cowan, 2009 as reported in Strasburger & Wilson).

Strasburger and Wilson (2013) conclude that “scientific literature is robust and consistent in supporting the idea that media violence can contribute to the development of aggressive attitudes and behaviors in childhood and even adulthood” (166). However, other factors such as poverty, racism, drugs, unique personality factors, and witnessing violence impact the likelihood of exhibiting violence.

This article prompted to mind an interesting video I had come across on social media in late 2018. This video showed two young girls,

A typical viewer will witness an average of nearly two gun-related violent incidents for every hour he or she watches television.

who appeared to be about the ages of 2 and 3, and in the background was the cartoon *Frozen* being played on the television. What made this interesting was that the two children were reenacting the scene between Elsa and Anna. Fortunately, the scene was innocent and loving as these two children were imitating the scene and mirroring each movement and action in the cartoon. Obviously, there were many positive comments regarding this loving and innocent scene these two little girls were imitating. However, my thoughts immediately turned to the studies of children imitating what actions they see in violent cartoons. The thought occurred to me that had this been a superhero movie, such as Wonder Woman or Black Widow or any of the female superheroes, would they be imitating these violent actions as well? If children can imitate what is good; it would also presume that children would imitate violent actions as well. Therefore, children should be watching more shows and cartoons that will have a positive effect on their behavior.

I myself was subject to these actions also. When I was in elementary school in about the third grade, I had a friend named Carlos, who always wanted to be a police officer. His father was not in his life, and his mom had to work two jobs to keep a roof over their heads. Carlos watched a lot of television and most of these programs were police shows. Back in the 1960s the big shows were westerns: *Gunsmoke*, *The Big Valley*, *Bonanza*, and reruns of *The Rifleman*. The new shows that were coming to primetime were police dramas, such as

Columbo, *MacMillan and Wife*, *McCloud*, and a detective show that was climbing in the ratings called *Mannix* starring Robert Conrad. Carlos would not want to miss an episode, so much so that if he could not watch a show, he would become violent and throw a tantrum. He was also obsessed with acting out the shows, and he would constantly want me to be the criminal. When I capitulated as the criminal, he would sit on top of me, pinning me to the grass, and punching me in the chest repeating the words “I am Mannix; I am Mannix!” Carlos eventually became a police officer for the City of Santa Paula and later became a detective.

Obviously, this is not a scientific study but merely an anecdotal observation from my youth. However, even as a young boy I could see the correlation between what my friend observed on television and his outward actions. Growing up, I loved watching Bugs Bunny and Warner Brothers cartoons. I never really thought of these cartoons as being violent because I was able to denote the difference between cartoons and televisions shows versus genuine real-life situations.

It also may have been my disposition and upbringing. I was never one who was a bully or an individual who over-powered others; however, I did experience being bullied not only by my peers in elementary school but by teachers as well. I realized that what was happening on television was not an interpretation of real life. This would seem to support the belief that different people from different backgrounds will no doubt respond differently to violence

on television. However, excluding violence in cartoons and children's television shows would seem to negate this altogether.

In 1963, a laboratory experiment was conducted by Bandura, Ross, and Ross concluding that toddlers who watched violent cartoons experienced higher aggression in their actions in hitting and biting and kicking toward a Bobo Doll. On the other hand, toddlers who watched non-violent cartoons had much less aggression. There was also a concern that the toddlers would see violence as something funny; however, there has not as of yet shown a validation that it would lead these toddlers into childhood and adolescence with a violent behavioral problem (Bandura, Ross, and Ross).

In 1971 and 1973 during two separate studies, Friedrich and Stein exposed preschool children to 20 minutes of Batman and Superman three times a week for one month, and then studied their actions to assess the effects of the programs on the children. They concluded that their actions became more aggressive after watching the violent cartoons (Coates, Pusser, & Goodman). The second study that was conducted generally confirmed the first study's results. Steuer, Applefield and Smith also concluded that eleven daily 10-minute sessions of watching violent television programs resulted in greater aggression. The opposite was true for those children who watched non-violent programming (Kirsh).

One note should be kept in mind. These studies were done in the 1960s and early 1970s. This was well before the cartoons of the 1980s and 1990s. If these general studies concluded that the actions of cartoons of that era were affecting children in a negative way, it can only be surmised that cartoons like *Beavis and Butthead* and *Steven Universe* are affecting children adversely.

Another study performed in 1980 with regard to children and cartoons was conducted to determine if active mediation would be effective to promote focusing on the victim of violence in a cartoon. The study showed that girls were not affected by the cartoon or the mediation; however, the boys who did not receive the mediation were more prone to aggression after viewing the cartoon violence. Their study examined television mediation as a means to minimize the adverse effects of television on children. This article and the resources cited within the article were not discussing whether or not violence in cartoons will have an adverse effect on children, but rather it is stated as a fact. The question lies in how to prevent or lessen these adverse effects. Some results seemed to be promising; however, there was some speculation that the studies may have been biased for several reasons. The child's pre-study knowledge that mediation would be involved may have led the child to complete an action to please the adult rather than as a result of the direct influence of the animated program. The active mediation

Children exposed to high aggression material showed a greater willingness to hurt another child.

Cartoons are a “double-edged weapon.”

may have conditioned the child to behave appropriately rather than equipping the child with tools to rationalize their own thoughts and actions after viewing the programs. Also, there was a lack of an overarching theoretical framework that could explain the reduction of aggression that occurred with active mediation. (Nathanson & Cantor).

Further studies in the early 1980s have been inconclusive when an adult mediates cartoons that are considered violent. It is unclear if the child is simply patronizing the mediator by answering and acting out to please the adult rather than responding to their own true actions by what they have viewed. Therefore, with this inconclusive data we cannot definitively say that by watching these violent animated programs with a mediator that the young child will discern what is bad and what is good apart from acting out how the adult would like them to act. We can, however, surmise that a child is constantly learning and absorbing information whether or not there is a mediator with the child and are most likely affected in a negative way by these programs as substantiated by the studies conducted in the 1960s and 1970s. A study was conducted by Sprafkin & Gadow (1988) on emotionally disturbed and learning-disabled children regarding the impact of aggressive or violent cartoons found that “children exposed to high aggression material showed a greater willingness to hurt another child.”

Effect of Cartoons and Children's TV Shows on Children's Social Behavior

“A multitude of girls have fantasized about being princesses and boys have imagined themselves to be valiant knights after watching classic animated tales like *Peter Pan*, *Aladdin and the Magic Lamp*, *Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast*, etc” (Nair). In an online parenting website, Nair (2018) highlights several positive and negative effects of cartoons on children from an observational or anecdotal aspect. The first positive effects deal with education. This can include helping children learn the alphabet, numbers, color, etc. through “fun and interactive ways;” helping develop cognitive skills such as logic, reasoning, and visual and auditory processing; assisting in language development; as well as teaching local customs, history, traditions, etc.

In addition, Nair points out that cartoons enhance the child's creativity. Cartoons also help children laugh, which can help to reduce stress and increase immunity, and this obviously applies to adults as well. Next, Nair discusses some of the negative effects of cartoons, which include encouraging violence, bad and unsocial behavior, foul language, and a lack of empathy

while children attempt to model their role models they are watching. She also points out that “sitting in front of a screen watching cartoons can cause several health issues due to inactivity and a sedentary lifestyle.” Obviously, this applies not simply to cartoons but to all television shows (Nair).

Since the 1950s when television introduced animation, the effects of animation have concerned child psychologists. In a recent study performed by Khaled Habib and Tarek Soliman (2015), they concluded that cartoons do have a strong effect on an individual’s childhood and take up a considerable amount of time from a young toddler’s schedule. This could have both positive and negative effects making cartoons a “double-edged weapon” (Habib & Soliman). It can assist in raising a balanced child and can even act as a home school that teaches lessons and life experiences they may not gain from parents and schools. However, cartoons also have the capability of exposing the same child to sexual and violent content that could ruin an individual’s childhood.

Out of the 100 children surveyed, 60% of them watched more than four hours of cartoons daily. These children were found to have been affected both psychologically and with regard to their spoken language. The study also indicated that children were more prone to fighting after watching cartoons, and that they prefer to watch cartoons over participating in outdoor games

(Habib & Soliman).

Using superhero cartoons such as *Batman*, *Superman*, and *Wonder Woman*, a study on the behavior and judgments of kindergarten, second, and fourth grade children “examined the influence of prosocial characters’ behaviors and messages alone when joined by aggressive actions by the same protagonists” (Liss, Reinhardt, and Fredriksen, 176). In other words, it set out to determine how children react to the actions, though be it good, of the superheroes and how they apply these actions to social interactions in life or in play. The study included three types of cartoons: Purely prosocial, prosocial/aggressive, and purely aggressive. The second part was to examine the developmental differences in message and comprehension as well as behavioral response to prosocial cartoons.

These hypotheses were broken down into 5 areas:

1. Children identify with good and bad or hero and villains, and they understand each roll and the reasoning for their roles.
2. Television programs identify the protagonist and antagonist explicitly, but the viewer must infer its reason for these roles.
3. Children pay attention, admire, and thus imitate the actions of the superhero or protagonist figure. It was predicted

Children imitate and incorporate prosocial actions when they are unencumbered by acts of aggression

that children would be influenced by a television superhero and would engage in aggressive and prosocial behaviors when these are modeled.

4. Children were expected to understand the message and engage in positive action if exposed to constant prosocial characters and consistent actions, prosocial rhetoric, and prosocial deeds.
5. “Children’s behavioral effects and comprehension of lessons would increase with grade level yet not reflect the resolution of the heroes’ inconsistencies” (Liss, Reinhardt, and Fredriksen, 176).

It was concluded that in order for the students to adopt a positive behavior, such as helping, and understand the lesson, it was imperative that the “program and its characters must both speak and act in positive prosocial directions” (186). Studies of prosocial television found that children imitate and incorporate prosocial actions when they are unencumbered by acts of aggression and additionally noted that children remember aggressive acts relative to motive and consequences. “The imitation and generalization of protagonists action rather than rhetoric, suggest that the discrepancy or conditions between work and deed is overlooked by children who cannot integrate the two components” (Liss, Reinhardt, and Fredriksen, 184).

Back in the 1970s, a study was conducted to see how children’s television programming would affect the prosocial actions and behavior of

preschool and kindergarten children (Coates, Pusser, & Goodman). Hundreds of children across the United States were studied. In the Friedrich and Stein study, 93% of preschool children were subjected to watching 12 aggressive cartoons (*Batman* and *Superman*), 12 prosocial programs (*Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*), and 12 neutral films. The subjects were 32 children between the ages of 3-8 and 5-7. Three children were of Asian origin, two of Chinese-American origin, two were children of black and white parents, one child was of black origin, and the remaining 24 were Caucasian. Six of the children were dropped from the study because of inadequate amount of data. The final sample consisted of 26 children (11 boys and 15 girls).

Observations were made on the children before the viewing to form a baseline of their social and behavior skills. They found that children who have a higher aggressive personality tend to become much more aggressive after viewing these higher aggressive cartoons. After viewing Mr. Rogers or Sesame Street, the children, especially those from a lower socioeconomic background, did not show a rise in their aggression. Rather, they showed an increase in prosocial interpersonal behavior; however, their aggression did rise after viewing such cartoons as *Batman* and *Superman*. After viewing Mr. Rogers, the children tended to give more praise and positive reinforcement to other children; however this was not the same behavior exhibited after viewing aggressive cartoon programming (Coates, Pusser, & Goodman).

The Sesame Street programming segments that

were shown to the children reflected an emphasis on reasoning, problem solving, counting, and classification, and these segments were “high in punishment” (Coates, Pusser, & Goodman, 140). Sesame Street increased the children’s giving of positive reinforcement and punishment to other children as well as punishment at different levels of the action. This also increased the social contact and behavior of the child with their peers. “Sesame Street can influence children’s social behavior in the preschool. The findings for positive reinforcement are in agreement with a recent study by Paulson (1974)” (Coates, Pusser, & Goodman, 143).

Models to Follow in Animation

There have been Christian animated programs that have been extremely successful. One program was the Claymation cartoon entitled *Davey and Goliath* (Fig. 27), which was able to achieve a level of success and longevity since the 1950s. This program centered around a young boy who was dealing with life’s problems in his pre-adolescence. While the cartoon’s demographics were aimed specifically to Sunday School children between the ages of preschool and grammar school; it did not target the general populous of that demographic. The show started in 1958 when the president of the United Lutheran Church in America (ULCA) put \$1 million aside to fund a television program sometime in the future.

The next year, ULCA “contract[ed] with Clokey



Fig.27 *Davey and Goliath* (©1966-2004 ELCA)

Productions, Inc., headed by Gumby® creators Art and Ruth Clokey, to create a new children’s show, *Davey and Goliath*” (“History of *Davey and Goliath*”) The first episode aired in 1960 and was only 15 minutes. Over the next couple of years, episodes were given to various TV networks, were translated in other languages, and were even shown overseas. In 1962, ULCA merged with other Lutheran churches to form LCA (Lutheran Church in America), which took over funding of the show and enabled production of 30 episodes by the end of the year.

A few years later, several specials were produced and aired. Between 1969 and 1971, LCA funded 35 more episodes, which included



Fig.28 In the 1970s, *Davey and Goliath* (©1966-2004 ELCA) introduced new friend Jonathan.

new friends Jonathan Reed (Fig. 28), an African-American boy, and Cisco, a Hispanic boy. The episodes had “lessons of racial tolerance and integration and love with the spiritual theme of the original series.” In 1971, the fifth special aired, and in 1975 the final

special aired. In 1986, the marketing rights were secured by Program Source International. By 1988, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was formed, and they now hold all rights to *Davey and Goliath*. During the 90s, “Davey and Goliath were referenced in pop culture venues such as *Dead Man Walking*, *The Simpsons*, *Friends*, *Beavis and Butthead*, *Mystery Science Theatre 3000*, and *Mad TV*.”

By 2002, the show had been translated into seven languages and had been broadcast on every continent except Antarctica. In 2003, nearly 45 years after it first began, *Davey and Goliath* products were licensed to be sold, including Plush and bendable toys, bobble heads, tee shirts, stickers, and lunchboxes. The next year, *Davey and Goliath’s Snowboard Christmas*, the first new Davey and Goliath production in nearly thirty years, was broadcast on Hallmark Channel, which led to “hundreds of press articles throughout North America” (“History”) The show was even featured in *Life* magazine in April 2005.

While the show *Davey and Goliath* did maintain some level of popularity and longevity over the last 60 years, it did not achieve great success within the secular world. On the other hand, *VeggieTales*, another Christian animation series, was able to achieve immense popularity in a relatively short timespan. Phil Vischer and his company Big Idea released the animated program *VeggieTales* (Figs. 29-30) in 1996. Within three years, the company had grown by 3300% and was bringing in revenue of \$44 million (Vischer). At this point, the company

found itself in what the industry considers “No Man’s Land.” This is when a company is too big to be considered a small business but still too small to be considered a big business. Vischer had to come up with a plan. The plan and its consequences, including bankruptcy, have been shared openly by Vischer himself in an eleven-part blog entitled “What Happened to Big Idea?” From this detailed history emerges numerous pitfalls to avoid while growing an animation program and company.



Fig.29 *VeggieTales* (©NBC Universal) videos include Biblically based stories brought to life by fruits and vegetables

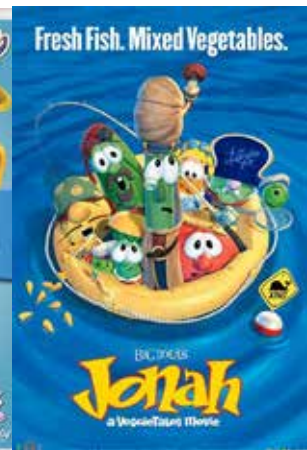


Fig.30 *VeggieTales'* (©NBC Universal) movie *Jonah* based on the Bible story premiered in 2002.

Vischer sums up these issues in his last blog, which includes the following: “Multiple factors eventually brought down Big Idea Productions. The Lyrick lawsuit certainly sealed the deal, but it’s unlikely that lawsuit would have happened if our dire cash need hadn’t forced us to switch distributors in search of new advances. So *Jonah* [Big Idea’s motion picture] is to blame! Well, maybe a little – but certainly not entirely. True, if *Jonah* hadn’t been put into production

The cartoon *Schoolhouse Rock* was an American tradition for four decades (Fig. 31). During the 1970s and '80s, the cartoon was designed to teach traditional educational lessons to young

The *Chronicles of Narnia* movies (Fig. 32) have been highly successful, grossing over \$1.5 billion worldwide since the first movie premiered in 2005, according to thenumbers.com. These movies were obviously appealing to the mainstream movie goers despite being based on religious books written by C.S. Lewis for children (Hanesová, Hanes, & Masariková). The first book of the series was published in 1950, and each of the six subsequent books was published each year following (Zafra, Cintia).



Fig.32 Poster from the movie *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (©Disney Netflix) based on the series by C.S. Lewis.

These stories center around four siblings who magically enter Narnia and are called upon by Aslan to help save Narnia from evil. Aslan is a lion, who sacrifices himself in the book to save the inhabitants of Narnia then comes back to life. He is the fictional representation of Jesus Christ (Zafra, Cintia).

In 2019, a study was conducted with 130 students aged 9-14 from “church-maintained primary schools” (Hanesová, Hanes, & Masariková, 216). The children were asked to spend time reading the *Chronicles of Narnia* books. They were then questioned to see how they could theologize about how the characters and concepts in the book related to God and His character.

Since these were children who were familiar with the Bible and God, it was not surprising that most of the children were able to recognize Christian themes throughout the books. However, what I found fascinating was that while most of them enjoyed the fantasy aspects and ultimate triumph of good over evil, many of the 10-year-olds in particular stated that they would “rather read a story that might have happened in real life” (Hanesová, Hanes, & Masariková, 219). This was consistent with what I have been hearing from the pre-teens in my art classes. This was further confirmation that the Rollerbots cartoon would be appealing to these young boys and girl in that they could relate to the everyday-type stories without there having to be a villain.

Summary

Throughout this chapter, I explored literature related to children’s programing and the effects, whether positive or negative, they may have on the children’s behavior. In the following chapter I will document my Visual Process relating to the creation and development of my cartoon characters and the deliverables that will serve as Visual Solutions to the problem of the lack of integrity in animation.



Chapter 3

Visual Process

As a cartoon enthusiast since early childhood, I have been concerned over the past thirty years with the direction that cartoons, animation, and children's programs in general have been headed and the effect on the children during those years. When considering an approach for my research study, this immediately came to mind. After a thorough review and analyzation of the literature presented in the previous chapter, several themes began to emerge with regard to my guiding research questions.

The research studies conducted do indicate a direct correlation between what children watch and their behavior, which can be a double-edged sword of both positive and negative effects. Further, children who view violent programs were shown to exhibit more aggressive behavior. The literature also revealed that violence and a lack of Christian morals have found their way into more cartoons and children's programs between 1950 and today. The literature also explored specific programs that were specifically devoted to producing Christian programs, such as *Davey and Goliath* as well as *VeggieTales*. With regard to cartoons and children's programing infusing education into their stories, the current

trend is to promote anti-Christian morals and ethics. What has ultimately emerged from this study is the gap in children's programing of an animated series that appeals to Christians and non-Christians alike with a high level of artistic integrity and storylines that are relatable to young children while promoting Biblical morals and values in a subliminal way similar to C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

The following documentation of my Visual Process will demonstrate how a series based on my characters The Rollerbots, The Elite 7, and The Librarians of Historical Culture and Knowledge can fill this gap. Although there is a great potential for a vast array of subject matter, in the beginning the Rollerbots would be introduced as fun-loving, curious individuals who are learning and understanding the ways of human life and existence, learning about the humans' past, and understanding the humans' culture. Children will be able to relate to the innocence, naivete, and curiosity of the Rollerbots as they are portrayed as highly intelligent characters who simply are attracted to but ignorant of the customs, cultures, and nuances of the human world.

The Elite 7 characters will be portrayed as scholarly businessmen and businesswomen who happen to be high caliber athletes as well. They are friends of the Rollerbots and want to introduce them to the world around them while subliminally teaching and illustrating Biblical values and principles, such as sportsmanship, integrity, and honesty. As they encounter new experiences such as sports, historical sites, and other activities, the Librarians will show up to give more historical and cultural relevance. The Librarians are characters based on historical artifacts such as an Egyptian bowl, the Easter Island statues, and Aryballos owls. Through this combination of characters, children will be exposed to academic and spiritual truths while being entertained by a high-quality animated series.

The preceding research would suggest that using all three groups of my proposed cartoon characters (Rollerbots, Elite 7, and Librarians of Historical Culture and Knowledge) would create a positive, educational and prosocial influence upon children as well as adolescent pre-teens. Using the “superhero-sports” theme as a structure for the Elite 7 would incorporate a protagonist with potential for imitation of action in the playing field for school kids. This will be infused with the Professors who work with the Elite 7. The four professors, who will be youthful yet mature, attractive, and intelligent, can bridge a gap between the Elite 7 and Librarians, who tap into the history of the past. This bridge is connected with the robotic intelligence of the Rollerbots as their intelligence is infused with the history of the past and innocence of their

perception of the illogicality of sports, which brings us full circle to the Elite 7.

Unlike with superheroes where there is the protagonist and the antagonist or villain, the Rollerbot cartoons will only address problems and situations in life to which children can relate. These cartoons will infuse information, education, and sports situations that emulate superhero actions yet identify with prosocial interaction with other children. The words and deeds, without aggression, will be consistent with this prosocial interaction (Liss, Reinhardt, & Fredriksen).

The development of my characters first began over 40 years ago during my high school years with the creation of the first ideation of a unique robot on one wheel. These Rollerbots were shelved until my undergraduate years at USC where I reworked them into comics that appeared throughout campus. The first ideation of what would become the Elite 7 first appeared in my senior seminar in 1996. Once again, the characters were shelved until they could be redeveloped throughout this research project as more than just a comic strip or cute characters but a relevant and significant answer to the animation gap as presented in the literature.

Development of the Rollerbots

The Rollerbots were created in 1979. The story of their development involves many different periods, events, and aspects of my life that have been incorporated into my characters. It begins

that summer as I was getting ready to enter my senior year at Santa Paula Union High School, located in Southern California. At that time, my dream was to swim for the University of Southern California, major in Commercial Art, as it was called at that time, and graduate with a degree in visual arts. The reality, however, was that I was most likely seconds too slow to swim for a Division 1 University, and my grades did not reflect my ambitions to attend my desired university. Although I was a four-year varsity letterman in swimming, a talented athlete, and a smart and intelligent teen, I did not see it, nor did my grades reflect it. Just seven years prior to this moment I had been bullied by my fourth-grade teacher. Because I was a global, visual learner, who had dyslexia, which had no diagnosis at the time, as well as an audio processing disorder, I found learning and understanding the way things were taught very difficult. I was labeled a problem-learner. I had teachers tell me that I was dumb, that I would be the only kid that would add 1+1 and get 36 out of it. They told me not to get into art because there was no money in it and not to get involved in sports because I was too uncoordinated. I was even told that if I wanted to become a bum, I most likely would be a failure at that too. Yet here I was, a school champion swimmer who held the school swimming record in the 100-yard breaststroke—a record that stood for the next forty years. Still, I felt the only thing I could hang on to was my art. Outwardly I appeared a confident, successful athlete and artist; however, inwardly I was feeling completely inadequate and uncertain about my future.

One day that summer, I was feeling particularly anxious about embarking onto my senior year with no real direction or self-confidence. There I was, sitting in my little blue Volkswagen Bug (Fig. 33) at the top of a hillside where I could see the Channel Islands off the coast of California some 24 miles away. The late afternoon sun was shining bright as I was doodling on a sketch pad. I was thinking about a conversation I had with an art professor about how most successful cartoon characters are based on circles. He went on to explain that the circle has many significant symbolisms—everything from a round ball to soft edges and even the representation of the female breasts, which represented comfort and safety in the psychological world.

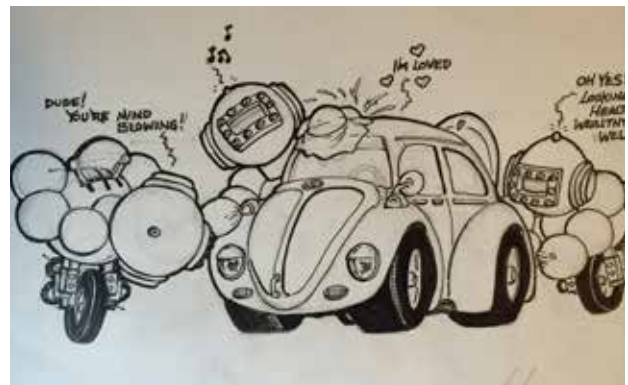


Fig.33 The Rollerbots were inspired by my Volkswagen Bug.

These thoughts were going around in my mind as I was doodling and drawing circles. Suddenly these round characters began to take shape. The characters had two large spheres with a cylinder connecting both spheres. There were four smaller spheres which made up each of their two arms. The top sphere served as a head, and it had two disk shapes on either side of the head, which could represent ears or hearing pads. As I

was looking at the stick shift in my Volkswagen, I saw the markings on the gear shift and placed it on the back of the bottom sphere of the character (Fig. 34).

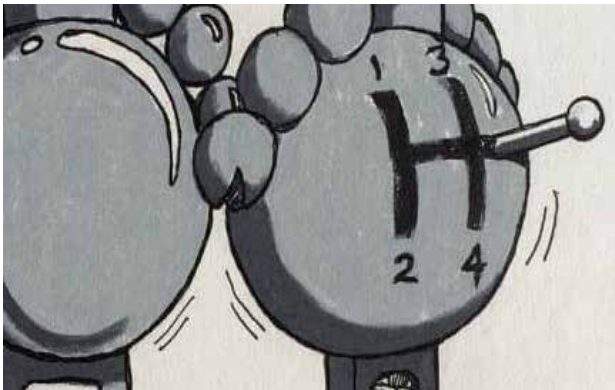


Fig.34 Close-up image of the Rollerbot showing the gear shift.

I knew my characters were not humans, so I decided they were some sort of robot. Typically when robots are designed, they simulate the human functions. This includes a head, arms, and legs. When I thought of the stick shift on the back of the Rollerbot, it was associated with some kind of wheel mobility. Having a stick shift and legs would just not make any sense, so having a wheel and stick shift became the novelty of my little characters. Originally a bicycle wheel took the place of the legs, but the small and thin tire with spokes just did not fit the style or the automotive-type gear shift. The tire was quickly replaced with a beefier tire, similar to a car tire with treads (Fig. 35). Wheels represented freedom and a sense of escape, and car tires had speed! So why only one wheel? Why not? Even though logically there would be issues with balance having only one wheel, I felt it worked aesthetically.

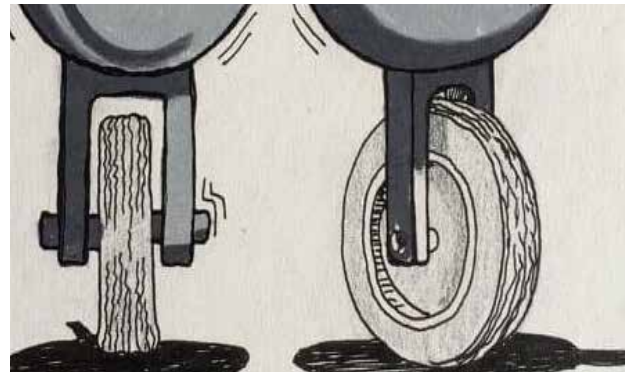


Fig.35 Close-up of the second revision of the wheel

With the final development of the body and wheel, I was still having trouble with the face. Nothing inspired me, so I considered other robots, such as Huey from *Silent Running* (Fig. 36), Robbie the Robot from *Forbidden Planet* (Fig. 37), and R2-D2 from *Star Wars*. If the previous robots without traditional faces were successful, I was sure it could work for the Rollerbots, so a simple faceplate was placed on the front of the head. It was smooth and contoured to the top sphere.



Fig.36 Huey from the movie *Silent Running* (©1972 Universal Pictures)



Fig.37 Robbie the Robot from *Forbidden Planet* (©1956 MGM).

The faceplate could also be seen as a mask, which seemed rather fitting to me. They seemed mysterious with no facial expression, yet they did

not seem to be threatening in any way. It really served two purposes: to keep the Rollerbots simple and ambiguous and to represent how I was covering the pain and hurt behind a mask, of sorts.

I had not been moved by any facial development; however, I knew there had to be some way of communication. I had to come up with a way to communicate without a mouth. I began to consider how we communicate through radio air waves. There had to be a receiver or something that would transmit. The only thing that would work was an antenna. Many other robots had them. Robbie the Robot had several antennas that spun, but I knew I did not want antennas placed all over my characters because it seemed to take away from the form of the spheres. Therefore, one wire antenna was placed on the top. About a year later that would be replaced by a solid spear-like antenna (Fig. 38) rather than the floppy wire. Thus, the way of communication was developed.



Fig.38 Close-up of Rollerbots communicating with their spear-like antenna

The pads that were placed on the side of the heads was originally just for visual effect with no real significance other than aesthetic value.

I originally placed only one pad on the side of the head, but it appeared rather undeveloped. I placed another pad on top of the first pad and made it a bit smaller. A third pad was placed but it now looked too wide and too top heavy. The two pads were perfect, and with one pad slightly smaller than the other, it had a finished look (Fig. 39). As the form of communication developed, I came up with the idea that the pads on top were actually speaker-type devices while the underside pad absorbed sound. So, what originally was only for aesthetic purposes was now a functioning part of the Rollerbots.



Fig.39 Close-up of Rollerbots showing the hearing pads.

When I first developed these characters, the goal was to have them in a syndicated comic strip. How that was going to happen I had no idea. What I did know was that I needed to come up with a title for my comic strip. Originally, they were to be aliens from another planet that came here to study humans. They were to be only three inches tall, so they could be hidden and observe us without being seen. The comic strip was to be called “Out of this World,” and the characters would just mimic our habits and way of life. It

was a way to poke fun at ourselves. After a few months I began to feel as if this was just another cliché “Outer space, Science fiction” story of the 1960s and 1970s, such as *Star Trek* (1966-1969), *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *Silent Running* (1973), and, of course, the beginning of the *Star Wars* franchise in 1977. So, within a year I dropped the idea that they came from another planet. From there, I knew I needed to come up a name for these characters.

While I looked at the definition of Robot, the online Oxford Dictionary gave me this:

Ro-bot n. (especially in science fiction)
a machine resembling a human being and able to replicate certain human movements and functions automatically.

While my characters did mimic human functions, they did not have legs. Rather, they moved on a wheel. They rolled. So I morphed these two concepts together and came up with the name Rollerbot. At the time, the name seemed rather unique; however in 1985 the Tomy® Toy company came out with their first battery powered owl type robot called Hootbot. Soon the name Rollerbot seemed to be just another play on the Robot name.

In the fall of 1979, I created the first sculpture of the Rollerbots using Sculpey® clay (Fig. 40). This type of clay allowed me to bake it in a home oven. The original sculptures will be added to my deliverables on display. Although I had drawn them quite a bit, imagining them

in 3D was challenging and the sculptures were somewhat crude and simple.



Fig.40 First Rollerbot life-sized sculptures were only three inches high. Here they are propped against a toaster. to show their size in relation to a common household object.

I continued to polish the design of my Rollerbots and began to draw comics centered around them. The Rollerbots officially made their premiere in our high school newspaper *The Daily Cardinal*, which contrary to what the name implied was only published bi-monthly. The Rollerbots appeared with some lighthearted humor and were well received. They became somewhat popular in school, and I later had all kinds of suggestions on how to develop them, with ideas ranging from having an evil counterpart, to having them being chased by humans and avoiding capture. I really had no direction for them. What I did know was that I wanted them to be innocent, naïve, and curious about humans; however, I also knew that I wanted them to be intelligent. This was the beginning of the first stages of development. The idea of their curiosity of sports did not come into thought until about a year later.

In June of 1980, the second sequel to *Star Wars*, entitled *The Empire Strikes Back* premiered. At that time I had been fascinated by the droid R2-D2. I think what fascinated me about him was his innocence, yet intelligence. I realized that there was a personality connection between R2-D2 and the Rollerbots. I do not know if that was a subconscious connection or a suggestive connection as *Star Wars* premiered in 1977 and the Rollerbots made their premiere in our school paper some 26 months later. I did know that the reason I gravitated toward the R2-D2 character (Fig. 41) was because he was innocent, loveable, and something I wanted to have with me at all times, like a pet.



Fig.41 Candid shot on the set of the original *Star Wars* (©Fox, Disney, Lucasfilm) movie that shows the height of R2D2 in relation to average-height men (<https://imgur.com/gallery/jKAAb>).

With everything in my life seeming so violent, so destructive, and feeling pressure to have this hard core, tough persona, I felt a welcomed sense of security in this science fiction character. After watching *The Empire Strikes Back* and realizing how loveable R2-D2 was, I realized that young children really liked his personality. As I studied him more it raised the question of whether he would have been that loveable if he were only three inches tall. That was quickly

answered when I realized he would have hardly been seen. This became the first major change in the Rollerbots: they went from three inches tall to three feet tall, or roughly a meter high.

The following month I pitched a comic strip idea to the local paper in our city. They did not completely turn me down, but only agreed to run one comic strip once a month for the next 12 months as a special for our graduating class. Looking back, I was fortunate that they gave me that much time in their paper. After all, I was just a young 18-year-old kid with no real illustration experience behind me—just a kid that had some imagination and had the ability to draw. After the year was over, the Rollerbots went into hiatus for the next 14 years until they reappeared in a newspaper called *The Daily Trojan* at the University of Southern California (USC) during my years there (1993-1996).

Evolution of the Rollerbots

My path toward USC and further developing the Rollerbots took many unexpected turns. In 1986, I became a firefighter on a whim and a dare. For the next seven years I worked my way up to engineer; however, I really did not consider this my career. During this time I was also developing T-shirts for various events and sports teams. While working with some of these students, I began also tutoring them in several different subjects, even in Honor classes. As “problem learner” who struggled in school so much, I was surprised when these students began encouraging me to pursue my dream of USC. Eventually one of the students surprised

me by making an appointment for me at USC. After a long conversation with the admissions office, I left with a goal of completing classes at my community college over the next two years and raising my GPA. Ultimately, I was accepted as a Junior at the Roski School of Art and Design just twenty-four months later. Thus, I left my job as a firefighter and began my studies toward my BFA at USC in Fall 1993 with a little more confidence in my scholastic ability than during all my previous education.

In the spring of 1994, the Rollerbots reappeared as sculptures in my ceramics class, though their appearance had changed. The torso, which connected the two spheres of the head and lower body, was smaller. Changes were made to the arms as well. They now consisted of three rather than four spheres, and the spheres were larger, giving the Rollerbots a greater sense of solidity. The mask was no longer flush with the top sphere but now stuck out like a face plate with twelve screws on the plate: four on the top and bottom and two on each side. I felt this gave the Rollerbot more personality.

Several of my fraternity brothers wanted a Rollerbot sculpture, so by the time I was finished, I had made one for just about every fraternity brother in my house and even some members of sororities as well. Two of the USC football players requested them as well. USC had a feeder satellite program for elementary schools, and one particular day I found out that some of the students had seen and even attempted to replicate my Rollerbot characters. Consequently, I made one for each student and

had them ready by the next week. The Rollerbots were gaining more popularity and had even made their way into the school newspaper, *The Daily Trojan*, as a comic strip and in ads. Later that year they made their way into a magazine called the *28th Street Magazine* (Figs. 42 & 43). This magazine was published and placed into universities throughout Southern California.

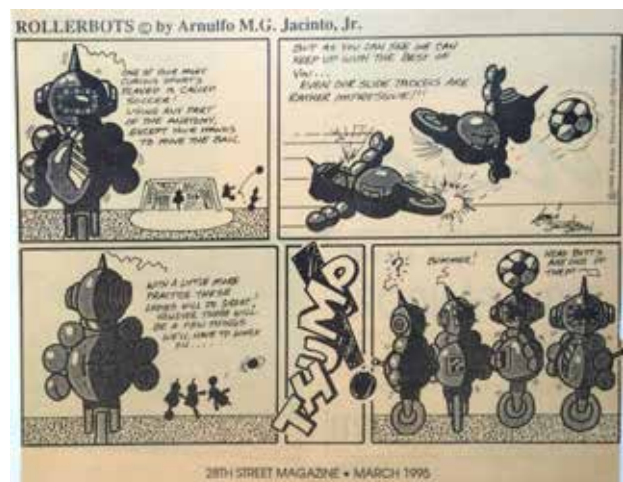


Fig.42 Comic strip that appeared in the March 1995 edition of the *28th Street Magazine*

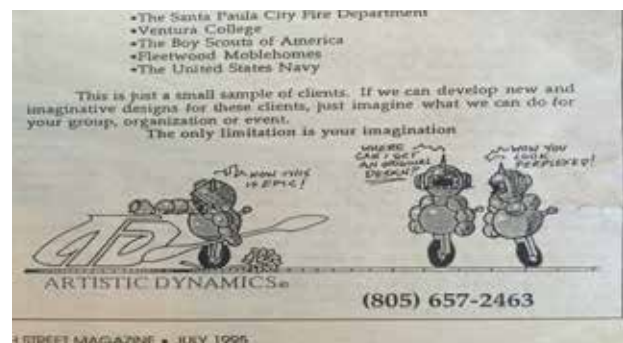


Fig.43 Ad featuring the Rollerbots that appeared in the July 1995 edition of the *28th Street Magazine*

By this time, my goal was not just to have the Rollerbots in a syndicated comic strip but in a television program. But what would be the plot? What kind of short stories could there be? I knew I did not want the story lines of the

Rollerbots to revolve around good versus evil or plots to sabotage the Rollerbot. What I was looking for was a kind of plot that would deal with everyday problems and how to resolve these problems in a way that would resonate with impressionable young children. The idea of framing the Rollerbots in a *Loony Tunes* format was an idea. But could there be another set of characters? How could I incorporate humans with the Rollerbots? What could be the connection? Then it hit me: athletics!

Development of the Elite 7 characters

Athletics seemed like the most obvious and best way to incorporate humans with the Rollerbots, but I also wanted these athletes to be well-rounded and to come from multi-ethnic backgrounds. I decided two of the athletes would be Native American because as a Native American myself, I felt there had not been enough positive influence based on the culture. Not only did I want to represent different cultures, but I also wanted to represent those with mental and physical disabilities. There were to be six athletes and one coach, who was also a professor in academic studies. Together they would be called the Elite 7. They would consist of athletes from a variety of sports: an elite-level coach, a sprint kayak paddler, a soccer player, a gymnast, an ice hockey player, an athlete with down syndrome that participated in the International Special Olympics, and finally an athlete that participated in the Paralympics.

I knew I did not want to create teenaged characters. There were several reasons for this:

The majority of children's cartoons or programing have characters that are young adolescents, pre-teens, or teens. Many cartoons and movies that are geared to young children have young adolescents or even teens as the main characters. They glamorize youth and show the characters in a rush to grow up and "make it big" at a young age. Disney has done this many times. One such example is in *The Little Mermaid* (1989) when Ariel, who is in love with Eric the Prince, believes she is old enough to make her own decisions in life and even says, "Daddy, I'm 16 years old. I'm not a child anymore!" At the end of the show, she ends up getting married. Although one could argue that this is only a fairytale, I believe this speaks to a bigger issue. Inevitably these characters become role models for the children. The problem is that in a lot of cases Hollywood portrays these young characters with adult responsibilities and the experience of adults such as in *Dexter's Laboratory* or even the *Power Puff Girls*..

Children are made to feel that success is a destination and not a journey and that all dreams can come true. These stereotypes must be shattered. Not only are the Elite 7 athletes, but they are businesspeople as well. They understand the meaning of hard work and that success is the journey not just the destination. They have had their pitfalls

as well as successes. They can serve as role models for hard-work.

Hollywood has portrayed adulthood and marriage in a negative light. Most people are familiar with *The Brady Bunch* show of the 1970s where the parents were seen as the final authority who disciplined their kids and knew what was best for them. However, by the following decade shows like *Roseanne* began to change the direction of family shows. The show portrayed both parents as being overweight, lazy, and cranky. The kids rebelled, the parents argued, and chaos ensued throughout the home. The parents seemed disinterested in their children and in disciplining them for their betterment. This theme was depicted in *Married with Children*, as well. With this type of primetime entertainment, the cartoon subculture tends to follow this primetime theme (Simensky) . Animated shows like *The Simpsons* or *King of the Hill* portray the wife nothing more than a “ball and chain” while the husband just comes home, sits on the sofa, cracks open a cold can of beer, and watches a ballgame with his belly hanging out of his shirt.

Today, more than ever, we need to have an animated program that empowers both the male and female and shows them working together. The Bible says in I Thessalonians 5:11 that we should encourage and lift each other up. This means to support each other and offer strength in another’s weakness, not only physically, but spiritually,

mentally, and academically. God created the institution of marriage (Genesis 2) and established that although man is the head of the household, he is to lift up his beautiful bride as an unblemished gift before the Lord (Ephesians 5:22-33). Children need to see how men and women, husbands and wives, and boyfriends and girlfriends work together to fulfill these Biblical principles. This is why the Elite 7 characters include married or dating couples that have opposite talents but complement each other as they strive to reach their dreams and goals.

Bearing all this in mind, I began developing these characters to be in their late 20s and early 30s. The characters were still in their early development, but the concept was enough, to present for my Senior Seminar for my graduation from USC with my Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA). (Fig. 44).



Fig.44 The Elite 7 were first presented in 1996 as part of my Senior Seminar at USC.

Following graduation, I was once again without connections to help me continue to develop

these characters, so they remained dormant, except for a few drawn here and there for kids who thought these characters were “awesome.” Eventually I began teaching at a Christian school in California where the characters became a regular in the comic section of the school newspaper, but nothing more really developed beyond that.

Resurgence and Relevance

In the twenty years between the time of my graduation from USC in 1996 and when I enrolled in the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) program at Liberty University in 2016, I began to see even more of the degradation and deterioration of animation as they began to blatantly include immoral activities, such as homosexuality and transgenderism, as well as rebellion against adults and parents with such shows as *Beavis and Butthead* and *Steven Universe*. As I witnessed this degradation of animation, I began to wonder how my Rollerbots and Elite 7 characters could begin to fill the void of high-quality cartoons or animation that infuse the liberal arts with relatable everyday-type situations, while promoting Biblical values and principles.

Liberal Arts Infusion

As I began to really look at the work of Chuck Jones and Warner Brothers' *Looney Tunes*, I began to really notice the nuances of education that are scattered within the stories. At first look, these animated shorts may appear to just be simple cartoons and slapstick comical shows

for children. But when one delves deeper into a story and watches the plot and hears the music, it becomes clear that there are small nuances of educational value.

For example, *The Barber of Seville* is spoofed by Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd in *Rabbit of Seville*, which premiered on 16 December 1950. This was directed by Chuck Jones and written by Michael Maltese, music by Carl Stalling and animated by Phil Monroe, Ben Washam, Lloyd Vaughan, Ken Harris and Emery Hawkins. The layouts or storyboard and background was developed by Robert Gribbroek and Philip De Guard. All of this talent combined to bring the opera to a young audience with a comical flair for kids to understand.

Just a year earlier, *Looney Tunes* paid homage to the great Leopold Stokowski in the 1949 short animated classic, *Long Haired Hare* when Bugs walks onto the dais with a wig, impersonating the great virtuoso (Fig 45). *Looney Tunes* effectively infused culture and art in cartoons.



Fig.45 *Long Haired Hare*. (©1949 Warner Bros.)

Chuck Jones and his team also placed large, complex vocabulary words into the shows periodically. This was evident in the 1951

animated short called *Drip Along Daffy*, where Daffy Duck plays a sheriff cleaning up a small western town, and he utters the phrase, “Slight pause while I adjust my accoutrements.” Exposing children to new vocabulary would cleverly create a dialog between the parent and child. I took all these ideas and began to develop a way to take inspiration from this model that Chuck Jones and Warner Brothers had done years ago. I now had a way to further develop the Elite 7 (Fig. 46) along with the Rollerbots and begin to bring back that integrity in animation using the liberal arts.



Fig.46 The Elite 7 now consisted of seven athletes in addition to the four professors.

The Elite 7 are scholars as well as athletes; therefore, there should be a connection to which adults and children alike can relate. I have also added four professors (Fig. 47) to the Elite 7. Two are historical professors while the main two professors have obtained great status in the arts, athletics, and business.

Even with these added characters, I realized I still needed a connection to the past with some added humor. This is where the Librarians of Historical Culture and Knowledge came in.



Fig.47 The Professors were based on myself and my wife as well as two Professors from LU who happened to be married.

Olive and Otis, two Aryballos Greek owls, are guardians to the Rollerbots as well as guides. There is Ombus (Fig. 48) an early Egyptian bowl with feet (Fig. 49). He can communicate by filling the bowl with water and vibrating the water with a high frequency to talk and create images. Eastman (Fig. 50) is a statue from Easter Island (Fig. 51)



Fig.48 Ombus



Fig.49 Example of an early Egyptian bowl with feet.



Fig.50 Eastman



Fig.51 Example of a statue from Easter Island.

There are three gargoyles, Luther from Germany, Wessex From England, and Lafayette from France; Collosius (Fig. 52) the Olmec colossal head statue from Costa Rica (Fig. 53); and Foo Foo Mee Choo Choo, the Chinese Foo Dog.

These characters, in essence, bring history and culture to life by sharing their memories and knowledge of the past. They also make connections with sports, the arts, sciences, math, literature, and history.



Fig.52 Collosius



Fig.53 Example of an Olmec colossal head

Artistic Integrity

Four paintings will be included in my deliverables to represent the infusion of education and culture with fine art and artistic integrity. Placing the Rollerbots into landmarks in a blue-chip style painting gives the Rollerbots a sense of reality, a sense of learning, and even a sense of prestige and culture. These paintings create the atmosphere of education and culture while maintaining a sense of entertainment, fun, and even humor.

The paintings also allow me to infuse the artistic integrity into the cartoon characters. As discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2), many cartoons

over the past thirty years have been drawn with rudimentary drawings and unattractive characters who behave in gross and crude behavior (Simensky). However, my goal is to have the cartoons illustrated with attractive and appealing characters where the human characters will have typical features with a superhero-like flare. The Rollerbots will have a chrome look that reflects the light and colors around them. The Librarians will be illustrated as recognizable caricatures of the artifacts they represent.

Because the Rollerbots are the main characters around which the stories revolve, they will be portrayed in the paintings. The first two paintings depict historical landmarks, one of which is local to my adopted hometown Lynchburg, Virginia. The two landmarks are Thomas Jefferson's homes Monticello and Poplar Forest. I was inspired by them and wanted to figure out a way to infuse the Rollerbots, a sense of learning, and humor into the paintings. I actually came up with the titles first. I had pictures from my recent visit to Monticello, so I looked through them to find the angle I wanted. I had pictures from Poplar Forest, as well, but they were not the angle I desired. Fortunately we live close enough to the site that we were able to make a trip and take more pictures. Once the reference photos were chosen, I began to make a graphite sketch on drawing paper that I would be able to transfer to my canvas (Fig. 54). From there I began painting using oil paints combined with Liquin.

The first painting is entitled: *Bring me a*

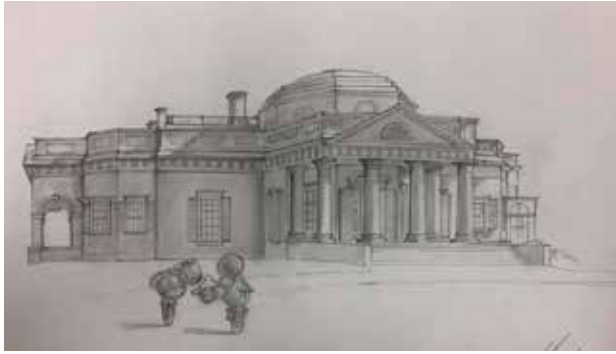


Fig.54 Finished graphite sketch to be transferred to canvas for the Monticello painting.

mound of Jello; meet me at Monticello...yep, I can see where you got confused (Fig. 55). As adults we know that Monticello means “little hill”; however, children may hear the word and be perplexed by it. Many have no idea what it means nor the importance of this historical landmark. In fact, some children may come up with different words that sounds like Monticello. Say the word fast, and it could sound like a “mound of Jello” to a child. This is the idea behind the title of this painting. As we now know, the Rollerbots are very intelligent and very intellectual, but even these characters may misunderstand what they hear if they are not familiar with the concept. I can also relate to a lot of this personally as I sometimes mis-hear something due to my auditory processing disorder, which is why I made the male Rollerbot, AJ7, the one who misunderstood—arriving with the mound of Jello.

The second painting is entitled: *Now I can see why this is such a Popular Forest...Uh, that's Poplar, my Love* (Fig. 56). I also played on the title of my painting of Poplar Forest, Jefferson's summer retreat located just west of Lynchburg, Virginia. In this case, another person thought I



Fig.55 In-progress painting of Monticello.



Fig.56 In-progress painting of Poplar Forest.

said “popular” rather than Poplar, so I ran with that idea. While in the first painting it is obvious that AJ7 misunderstood the directions, the second painting is a bit ambiguous. AJ7 may have made another mistake; however, through closer observation you can see AJ3, the female Rollerbot, petting the elk, suggesting that she made the mistake this time.

The third painting, *Little Red Schoolhouse*, is more personal, as it is from my hometown where I grew up. The building depicted is an actual schoolhouse located between the cities of Santa Paula and Fillmore in Southern California. It was built in 1896 and is still functioning as an accredited California public school from K-8th grade. From there the students will either attend Santa Paula High School or Fillmore Unified

High School. The schoolhouse is an official state landmark (Fig. 57).



Fig.57 In-progress painting of *The Little Red Schoolhouse* depicting a schoolhouse in Southern California that is an official state landmark.

This painting demonstrates that learning can be fun and exciting, but I also want it to show that school subjects should be interrelated for children. Many students are not aware of these connections because most teaching is done in a compartmentalized way. When teaching Biology, the arts are usually not mentioned, yet if we see a butterfly we are in awe of the artistic beauty of its wings and colors. This can apply to any and all subjects. While baking or sewing in Home Economics class, there is mathematics involved when measuring and art when designing the items. Even in sports such as swimming, coaches can introduce students to physics by explaining the torque it takes to move 180 pounds of muscle through the water using leverage and how resistance, drag, pitch, yaw, mass, and force all come into play.

In school, the subject of History is almost never connected to the Arts and vice versa.

Rarely is a word even mentioned about the Italian Renaissance artist Fillippo di Ser Brunelleschi, the “Godfather of Architecture,” whose rival Lorenzo Ghiberti was awarded the commission of *The Gates of Paradise*. This painting will depict children listening to Shakespearean stories, studying plants in the sciences, as well as learning physics using balloons or other functioning aircraft. This depicts interdisciplinary education as well as a combination of fantasy with reality. What is special about this painting is that the Rollerbots will no longer be just observing, as in the first two paintings, but will be interacting with the environment and the children and even performing with and for them.

The final painting is a mixed media painting combining Acrylic, Oils, Oil Pastels, Turpenoid, Glaze, and Water on Canvas. I wanted to incorporate the Rollerbots in a different environment and create more fantasy. I became inspired by my love for the water and experiences on, beside, and below the surface of the water. I decided to have two Rollerbots on the bottom of the ocean interacting with underwater creatures.

I began by combining the different mediums to create different layers for the background that would serve as the underwater world. Feedback I received on my finished painting (Fig. 58) indicated that the Rollerbots should be larger and there should be more interaction. I also realized that I needed to infuse an element of history and geography as in the other paintings. I wanted to create a composition with an

exciting connection between art history, our ancient culture, and what we can connect with the Bible. So I painted over the Rollerbots and began to paint in an ancient civilization at the bottom of the ocean as displayed in my digital version (Fig. 59).



Fig. 58 First version of the painting *Underwater Exploration*



Fig. 59 Digital version of *Underwater Exploration*

Athletics, Sportsmanship, and Leadership

Athletics such as PE and extra-curricular sports can also be seen as part of a well-rounded liberal arts education. As mentioned, the Elite 7 are not only scholars but athletes, and they love introducing and explaining elements of sports to the Rollerbots. Are the Elite 7 characters superheroes or just super elite athletes? Well, we know they are exceptional, but it really is not clear. Children relate to and are inspired not only by celebrities but well-known athletes, as well as superheroes. Fantasy figures are also especially popular at this time, so these characters would check many of these boxes. Life is a competition; however, how one accepts

victory or defeat is really an integrity issue. I was told by my Olympic Coach that we do not really learn anything from winning; it is in our defeat or loss that we learn what we did wrong and how to improve. Granted, there will always be joy from the spoils of victory, and the prize that awaits the winner at the end. However, focusing on the competition and how one performs is an issue that should be brought to the forefront of thinking. Anyone who has played sports is familiar with the term sportsmanship, yet we only seem to apply this when a person is the victor. Winning is not everything, nor is it the only thing. How we handle ourselves as athletes and distinguish ourselves as a class player can outweigh any victory that lacks the integrity of sportsmanship. However, it is equally important that children learn that there will always be winners and losers. Contrary to what is being promoted these days, not everyone who competes will win the prize. Children need to learn how to lose with grace and to be resilient and determined to continue to work hard.

Many high caliber athletes also serve as captains or leaders on their team. This is not as easy as it looks, however. Only true leaders with integrity will be able to help their teammates and inspire them to do and be their best. As athletes, just as in life, there are times we are forced to work with individuals who clash with our own personality. These issues will be portrayed by the Elite 7, as well. Not all the Elite 7 are best friends. In fact, some have personalities that may clash, and they may even encounter conflicts. However, they all work together for a common goal.

Diversity: Multi-cultural

Today we live in a black and white world, but it is important that my characters represent as many different cultures as possible. It has come to the point that when we see commercials, television shows, or even the movies, for the most part we see either the Black or African American culture or white European culture, when in fact there are many cultures in the United States. One culture that has been overlooked for centuries is the people of the 500 Nations, otherwise known as the Native American people (Fig. 60). The Far East culture is also often left out (Fig. 61). I wanted to highlight aspects of these cultures with my characters, so I started to reimagine and redesign each character so that each one was of mixed races, ethnicities, and cultures so that every child could relate to them. My Elite 7 characters are now athletes and businesspeople that come together from multi-cultural backgrounds so they can understand, appreciate, and share the deep rich cultures they all have to offer.



Fig.60 Centauri "Dancing Fawn" represents the Native American culture.

Fig.61 Eric Han-Gyong Jin represents the Asian or Far East culture.

I then began to wonder how this could translate to my Rollerbots. One person had mentioned to me that the Rollerbots looked so identical that you could not tell the difference and suggested that I should make some changes. Those suggestions would not work in my design; however, he did bring up a point. It was then I decided to begin experimenting with making each Rollerbot a different color (Fig. 62).



Fig.62 Rollerbots in different colors done with pen and ink and airbrush on illustration board.

Diversity: Disabled

In the last 30 to 40 years, athletes with physical disabilities have been featured more often as an integral part of our society. They are bringing awareness not only to themselves but to the disability community as a whole. Amputee Oscar Pistorius participated in the London 2012 Olympic Games in addition to the Paralympic Games, which were held a week later. While he is probably the most well-known Paralympian who has participated in the Olympic games, he was not the first amputee. George Eyser of the United States participated in the St. Louis 1904 games in gymnastics. Dong Hyun, an archer from South Korea with impaired vision (only

10 percent vision in the left eye and 20 percent in the right eye) also competed in the London Olympic games as did Natalia Partyka, who had no right hand or forearm and was competing in her second consecutive Olympic Games (Wallechinski & Loucky). My original characters did have one athlete in a wheelchair, but I began to rework them to include another physically disabled character while also maintaining the element of “super-hero.”

There is also an older athlete named Larry who has an intellectual disability and participates in the Special Olympics (Fig. 63). When the Special Olympics was founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, it was to celebrate those children and adults with what we now refer to as intellectual and developmental disabilities. Its first games were held on July 20, 1968. It gave these citizens a chance for self-respect and value.



Fig.63 Two ideations of Larry, who represents athletes in the Special Olympics.

Although some 53 years later and with much international growth, the mission is still somewhat true to its founding statement. As with all competitive organizations, there are changes; however, these games still give great

meaning and value to those citizens to compete at a high caliber level but on their own playing field.

Modernization

As I began to redesign my characters using different mediums within studio and even graphic arts, it was brought to my attention that several of the characters did not look modern. I was told one resembles Velma from Scooby-Doo (Fig. 64) and another resembled the character Joe Dirt (Fig. 65) from the movie with the same name. I began to realize that many of my style choices were stuck in the 70s and 80s. I began to research more modern and relevant cartoons, shows, and movies to add some cultural distinctions to make sure that my characters did not appear dated (Figs. 66-69).



Fig.64 Professor Phillips resembled Velma from Scooby-Doo.



Fig.65 Thadius resembled the character from the movie Joe Dirt.



Fig.66 Thadius updated



Fig.67 Thadius the Viking



Fig.68 Michaela's hair and facial features needed to be updated



Fig.69 Modernized line drawing version of Michaela

Distinct Genders

Many animated programs in recent years have fallen to the subjective pressure of promoting homosexuality, transgenderism with males identifying as female or vice versa, and even including an undeterminable number of genders or non-binary. Even if it is not the main issue being promoted, it is included as “the norm.” This kind of thinking for young children is very damaging. To combat this and reinforce traditional, Christian and biological truths, the Elite 7 have an absolute distinction between male and female (Figs. 70-73).



Fig.70 Another version of Monaco.



Fig.71 Another version of Michaela.

This caused me to begin to think that the Rollerbots should also come from a two-gender society. To a Rollerbot, we all look very much



Fig.72 Full body portrait of male character Monaco

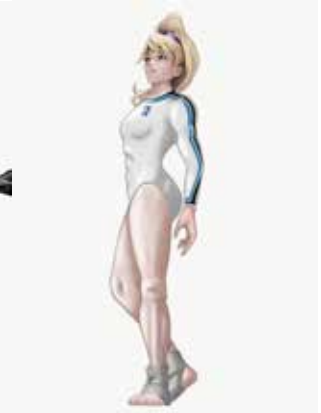


Fig.73 Full body portrait of female character Michaela

identical, and it is hard for them sometimes to distinguish us from others. With the exception of the male and female reproductive organs, we are basically the same; however, the genders do have some distinct differences that are recognizable. I thought this would be perfect to do the same with the Rollerbots. So, the female Rollerbots have a simulated breast line, and they have long eyelashes along with a bow on the back of the head. Another distinguishing difference are the “legs” that straddle the tire. The male Rollerbots’ legs (Fig. 74) are square and blocky whereas the females’ legs (Fig. 75) are smooth and shapely, giving a softer look. Finally, the gear shift on the back is different: the male have a standard stick shift, the female have automatics.



Fig.74 Male Rollerbot legs on digital painting.



Fig.75 Female Rollerbot legs on digital painting.

These differences can best be seen and appreciated by viewing the Rollerbots at their full height of three feet. Therefore, my deliverables will include two life-sized Rollerbots, constructed out of Worbla®.

The process of creating these life-sized Rollerbots was challenging. I knew I could use styrofoam balls for the smaller parts and wrap Worbla around it. However, I knew trying to use a styrofoam ball, or any other sphere, would make the structure, and especially the head, too heavy. So I molded the Worbla® inside a large metal bowl to form both halves of each large sphere and connected them with another piece of Worbla® (Fig. 76).



Fig.76 Creating the large spheres for the head and body was a process of trial and error. This photo shows a failed attempt and a successful attempt while creating the first three-foot tall, life-sized Rollerbots.

The entire process was a series of trial and error, but with each successful step, I could see the Rollerbots starting to take shape. I completed the heads of each Rollerbot (Fig. 77) before attempting the bodies (Fig. 78) then adding the leg and wheel to each (Fig. 79). Once all the parts of the body were assembled into each Rollerbot, the surfaces were covered in gesso and joint compound to smooth out the surface

then sanded. All that remained was to paint them with acrylic paint..



Fig.77 The heads of the female Rollerbot, including the masks, hearing pads, antenna button, and bow were nearly completed.



Fig.78 Once the legs and wheel were attached, a stand was constructed for each so they could be covered in gesso, sanded, then painted.



Fig.79 Once the bodies were assembled, I still needed to add the legs and wheel to each of them.

The Importance of Visual Aids

Verbal explanation for an example in the visual arts can only go so far. When an example is explained rather than shown it leaves so much ambiguity in the presentation. Even the most visual and imaginative individual has to have some kind of visual example of the concept,

idea, or physical body of work. There are many examples of this type of presentation. It is also known as the “pitch” to the animation studio or development team. Here is one example:

A young man who has not even reached his 30th birthday is presenting an idea to a movie studio. His idea is about a young princess and hero –

Let us stop here for a moment. Already his youth and inexperience are working against him, but now his storyline does not appear unique. Just the idea of a princess and a hero goes back hundreds of years. Shakespeare has done this with *Romeo and Juliet*. Many western motion pictures follow the same concept as do many fantasy stories. Without something special about this story, this is not going to impress the movie studio.

This young man continues with his story by adding that it is about a princess that has obtained secret information that could destroy a secret weapon meant to destroy an entire planet. The hero comes into play because he is connected to another individual who happens to know his father. Within this story are mechanical robots known as droids as well as villains that are masked and leaders of a powerful empire. Intermingled into this story is a renegade pirate, who has a partner from another planet. Powerful knights that use a supernatural power called “The Force” are placed into the story along with an all-knowing and wise knight that is 900 years old. Together they gather their forces to defeat this Empire.

As you can tell, the motion picture being described or pitched is *Star Wars*. The 28-year-old young man making this pitch is George Lucas. Imagine for a moment that Lucas had not had visual aids such as storyboards and concepts of the unusual space crafts and droids. This phenomenal motion picture would have never been developed, and the movies that have influenced generations decades later would have never existed.

An idea is just that: an idea. However, the idea must have some continuity and some sustainability to stand alone. Visual concepts help to excite and move the concept to the next level of development. Without visual concepts or visual aids to express one’s idea, it can fall flat before it even gets off the ground.

Paintings and static drawings of my characters are one aspect of presenting my characters, and my three-dimensional sculptures of Rollerbots are another aspect. Still, in order to properly present my characters as an animated series, it became important to begin working on some actual animation. As a studio artist, this was quite a feat to attempt.

I began to familiarize myself more with Adobe Sketch on my iPad Pro and transfer the images to Photoshop. I was able to manipulate the images and adjust the resolution to a certain extent. I knew these skills would be needed to create the background and characters that could be transferred to Adobe Animate. However, before any animation could be attempted, I first needed to create a storyboard.



Fig.8o Early storyboard attempts more closely resembled a shot list (StudioBinder: Storyboard & Shot List)

The Changing Nature of Storyboards

When I graduated from the University of Southern California's Roski's School of Art and Design back in the 1990s, we were shown a basic storyboard, which I now know was more of a concept to a storyboard. It consisted of thumbnail sketches of basic ideas and concepts but did not include camera angles, music cues, voice cues, script placement, color and mood placement, pan shots, zoom ins and zoom outs—all the vital ideas that were needed to develop an animation story. When I began my storyboard for the scene that was to be animated for my presentation, I began doing thumbnail sketches of the scene as I had done at USC. However, these sketches resembled more of a shot list than a current storyboard (Fig. 8o).

Once submitted, my Chairman Professor Ronald Sumner pointed me in the direction of storyboard development (Fig. 81). He had me research some of the best storyboard

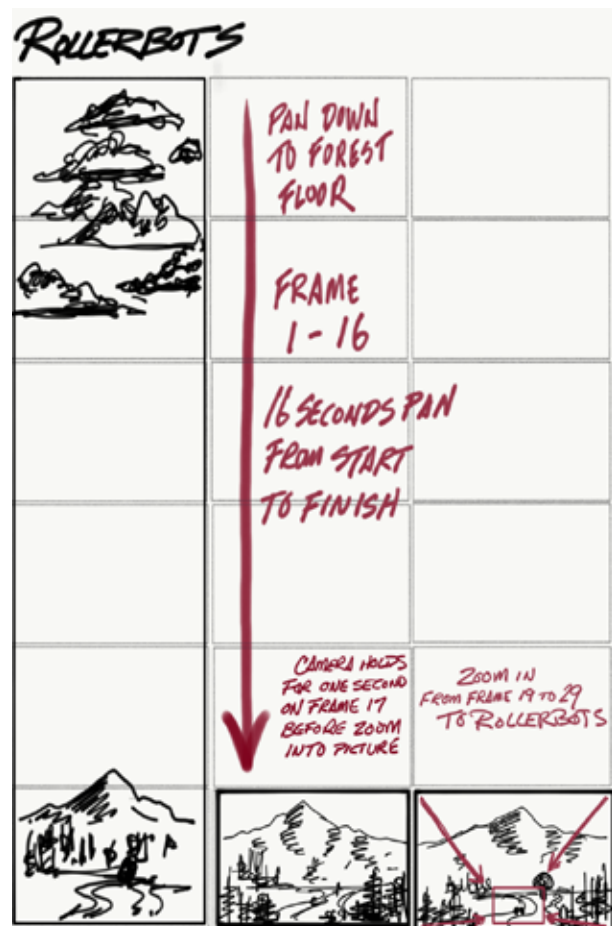


Fig.81 First draft of Storyboard for the first several frames.

artists. I came to realize that storyboarding is an art unto itself. It was eye opening for me in

understanding that the storyboard is the actual “cake,” the substance, of the animated story, and the final animation is actually the “icing on the cake” creating the final presentation, if you will, of the animated story. Thus, began my study and research of storyboards, including the work of animator Aaron Blaise.

Some of the important aspects I learned include the following:

Angle shots: this includes what direction the camera is entering. Zoom in shots, drop shots, zoom out shots, shots that create an emphasis on a mood or action that is going to prepare the viewer to the next scene.

The 180-degree line: It is vitally important not to cross this line, for it can confuse the viewer’s understanding of the direction of the action and placement of the characters. Like every rule there are exceptions to crossing the 180-degree line. One example is a scene where the Rollerbot AJ7 falls into a rushing stream. The 180-degree rule can be dismissed because we are trying to cause confusion for the view; ultimately, though, we must continue in the same direction in which AJ7 fell into the water.

In developing my storyboard, I had written a script (Fig. 82) for a scene in what could conceivably become a pilot episode of the Rollerbots. My committee and I discussed which portion of the scene would be most impactful as animation. Finally, the storyboard showed the different positions for the characters and the camera angles. Now I needed to be able to utilize software to animate my scene.

```

AJ3 takes the flowers and brings them up toward her face.

      AJ3
      (lovingly) Awww...
      (SOUND OF GROUND CRUMBLING BENEATH AJ7)

      AJ7
      Oh no!! I'm falling!

      AJ3
      (screaming) Wooooo! My Smokes!
AJ3 ROLLS toward AJ7 and holds out her arm

      AJ3
      Hurry and grab hold of me.
AJ7 continues to fall back

      AJ7
      I can't! I'm slipping! HELP!!!
      (SOUND OF BIG SPLASH as AJ7 hits the water)

      AJ3
      Hold on. I'm coming.
AJ3 ROLLS alongside the river as AJ7 floats downstream.

      AJ7
      (gurgling) H...he...help!!

      AJ3
      I'm not fast enough!
      Someone...anyone...please help!!

      (SOUNDS OF AJ7 SPLASHING, GURGLING, AND METAL HITTING THE ROCKS)

AJ3 continues rolling along river and calling out to AJ7

      AJ3
      (yelling) I'm here. Just hold on...

      (SOUND OF RUNNING FEET in the distance but growing louder)

Suddenly a young man and woman are running toward the Rollerbots.

      CENTAURI
      Monaco, you rescue him. I'll take care of her.

      MONACO
      Will do, Centauri.
AJ3 is oblivious to the two humans and continues following AJ7 down river.

      AJ3
      (shouting frantically) I'm coming in to get you, my love!

```

Fig.82 Portion of the script written for the pilot episode of the Rollerbots.

I created a background of different layers in Adobe Sketch and transferred that over to Animate. However, the resolution was not adequate, so while I did achieve an animated partial opening scene, it was far from the professional look that I desired. (Fig. 83). As a studio artist, my experience and skill in graphic art has been limited; therefore, I had to study and research and experiment with different and better ways to achieve the desired results .

The final animation sample is to serve as the introduction to the two main Rollerbots, AJ7 and AJ3. The Elite 7 and Librarian characters



Fig.83 Screenshot of first animation created on Adobe Animate in 2020.

will also be added to the end of the animation sample to introduce the characters and their names.

The last deliverable project will be a mixed media project consisting of relief and 3D assemblage elements (Fig. 84). It will showcase 3D Rollerbots constructed with Sculpey inside a constructed foam core model of an art museum. The Elite 7 and Librarian characters will be featured as digital paintings on the walls of the museum (Fig. 85). The relief elements of the project will be the hand-sculpted frames around the paintings (Fig. 86). Accompanying the model will be a separate display with character specifications, including pictures,

names, and special skills. This will serve as a way of showcasing each of the different characters, their groups, and crests. The art museum is being used to symbolize the integration of education, history, and art.



Fig.84 Concept sketch of mixed media project consisting of relief and 3D assemblage elements.



Fig.85 Digital painting of the Elite 7 group.



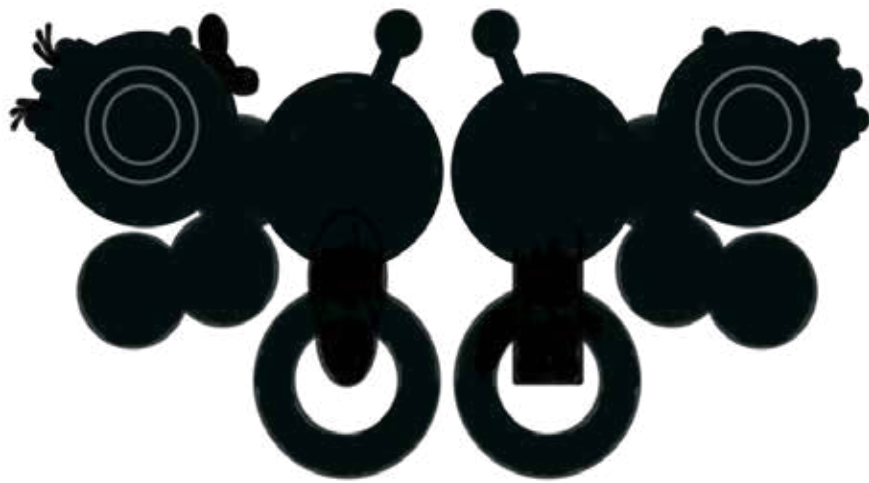
Fig.86 Hand-sculpted lion on a picture frame constructed of Sculpey.

Summary

In this chapter I have highlighted the development and evolution of Rollerbots, Elite 7, and Librarians of Historical Culture and Knowledge as cartoon characters that

can bring back the integrity of animation. I have documented my visual process in creating deliverables that will demonstrate how my characters will be relevant both in their artistic value and subject matter. The following chapter will showcase the finished deliverables that will serve as my visual solution to the problem of the degradation of animation that has occurred over the past forty years.





Chapter 4

Visual Solution

In the preceding chapters, I have presented research that indicates the decline in the integrity in animation with regard to the artistic quality as well as the subject matter, especially in the past thirty years. Much of the animated programming that emerged during that time began to include content that ranged from mildly inappropriate jokes and innuendos, to outright moral depravity. I proceeded in the previous chapter to introduce my proposed deliverables that will feature my original cartoon characters, the Rollerbots, Elite 7, and Librarians of Historical Culture and Knowledge. I then demonstrated how the cartoon characters could be infused with relevant academic and spiritual content to provide a viable solution to the content that is available now.

Cartoons of the 50s, 60s, 70s, and early 80s were reminiscent of vaudeville and slapstick gags, jokes, and stunts rather than the graphic, crude, and even vulgar humor depicted over the last thirty years in shows such as *Beavis and Butthead*, *The Simpsons*, or *The Maxx*. There is a void of cartoons that hearken back to the days of vaudeville and innocent humor with content that is age-appropriate, educational

both academically and socially, and infused with Biblical principles. Therefore, my approach to returning the integrity to animation was to incorporate elements of the successful animation programs of the 1950s through the 1980s while adding relevant academic, cultural, and Biblically inspired subject matter. In addition, my goal is to update the look of my characters so that they look modern and will appeal to the contemporary viewership of young children and their parents. Throughout this chapter I will reveal my final Visual Solutions and how they address the issues presented in the research.

Artistic & Spiritual Integrity

Today the most popular animation in theaters and in television is either anime or 3D animation with computer generated images (CGI). The 3D animation was widely popularized by Pixar's *Toy Story*. This has continued to advance, and today there are technical differences that were not available at the time *Toy Story* was first developed, such as has been seen in *Star Wars: Rogue One* as discussed in Chapter 2. Anime,

which is Japanese for animation, is also very popular with the kids in America today, who describe it as any animation done in Japan. The animation from Japan has been around since about 1917. Some of the more popular anime cartoons throughout the years include *Kimba the White Lion* (1950), *Gigantor* (1956: released in America in 1964), *Speed Racer* (1967), *Sailor Moon* (1995), *Pokemon* (1996). These two styles of cartooning have been extremely popular with children as well as high school students that want to get into character development or animation. A great majority (nearly 76%) of the preteen and teen students that I have taught in my drawing classes have been influenced by anime, with over half of these students wanting to pursue this as a career. As I have redeveloped my characters, I have taken elements from these two styles but also wanted to maintain some of the style and characteristics of the “old school” animation from the time of Chuck Jones.

Chuck Jones animated and directed many of the most successful shows and characters during those combined humor and quick wit as shown through expressions of the characters. He was the master of capturing a character’s expression in that split second before an event was to take place in that scene (Chuck Jones). Facial expression is so instrumental in capturing expressions of surprise, shock, fear, action, etc. My Elite 7 characters can obviously express facial expressions, but for the Rollerbots this becomes a bigger challenge in that there are no facial features apart from the faceplate. Instead, these expressions must be achieved by specific body movements: shoulder positioning, leaning

forward with their arms placed behind their backs, and the wagging of the stick shift on their back. In order to develop these different body positions to emote specific emotions, I have referenced the actions and movements of pre-school aged children. These young children have not yet learned to hide their feelings, so their body movements and actions tend to betray their emotions. Stylizing these actions to fit the Rollerbots helps to create their movements of expression and innocence (Fig. 87). Similarly, the expressions and feelings of the Librarian characters that do not have standard facial features would be created through body language.

In many storylines for movies, plays, or televisions shows there is the more serious character known as the “straight man” and the comedic actor. Many times, the straight actor is the hero or heroine while the comic relief actor is the brunt of the joke. This holds true for many cartoons, as well. A great example of this is Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck. Bugs typically had the heroic role, whereas Daffy was the brunt of the joke.

While this formula has worked, my approach to The Rollerbots cartoon would be slightly different in that no characters will be designated as the “hero” or the brunt of the jokes. The Rollerbots will be the informative characters, who are bright, knowledgeable, and wise; however, their innocence and ignorance of the nuances of humans will be portrayed in a comical way, such as their referring to humans as “Pedxings” due to their misunderstanding of

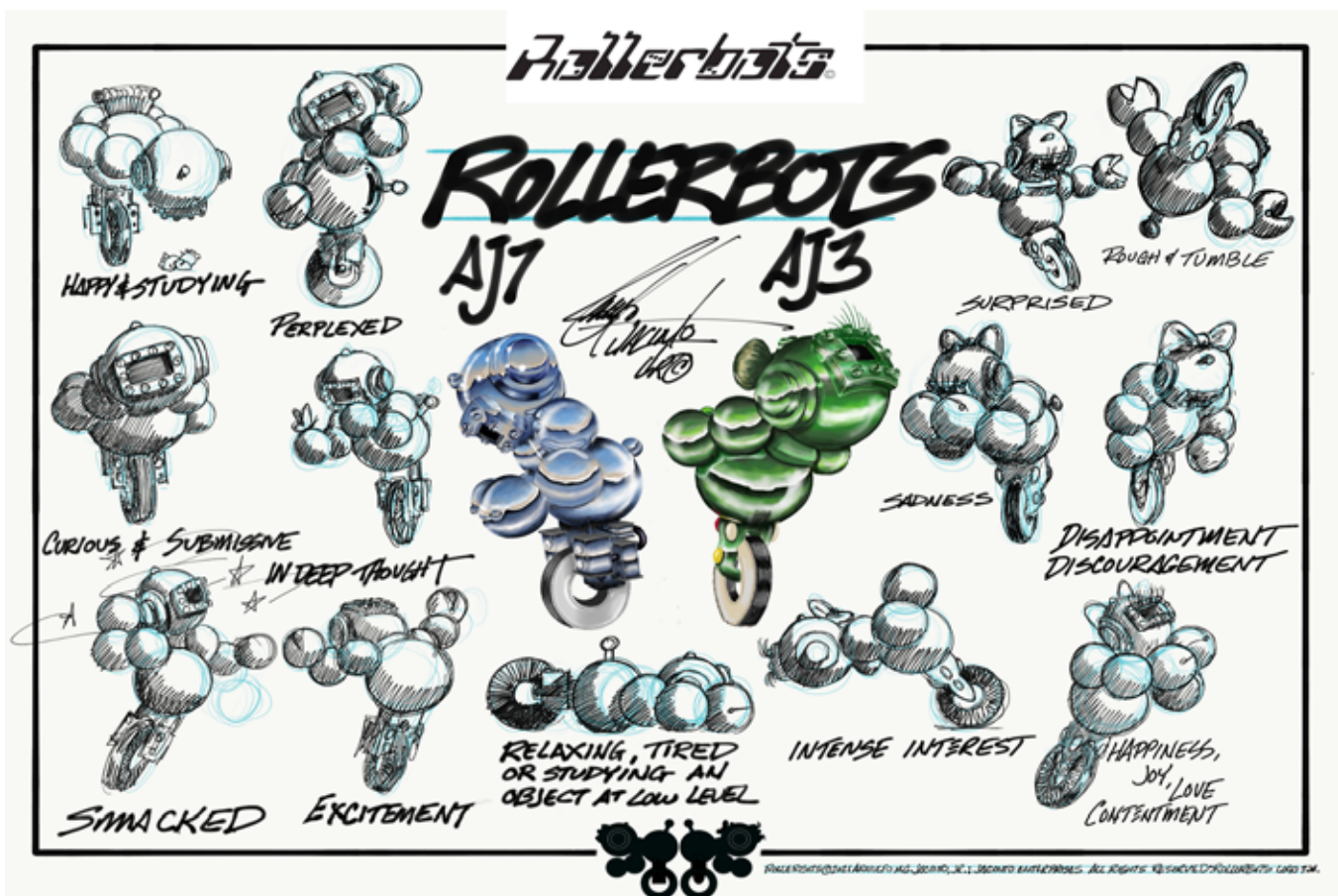


Fig.87 Rollerbot Emotional Chart demonstrates how the Rollerbots will use body movements and positions to indicate different feelings and emotions and expressions.

the labeling of a pedestrian crossing (Fig. 88) as “Ped Xing.”

These misunderstandings will be woven throughout the storylines. This is where the human characters come into play. The Elite 7 and Professors are the Rollerbots’ link to the human world. They help to demonstrate and explain the instinctive nature that humans possess to strive for excellence in their lives. In sports, this translates into working with others to achieve a common goal, even if they have different personalities or come from different walks of life. These principles can also be applied to achieving in school, business, and in life experiences, which are often overlooked. These characters will interact with each other



Fig.88 Rollerbots examining a pedestrian crossing and trying to determine the meaning of “Ped Xing.”

in typical everyday situations and explain to the Rollerbots (and to the young audience, by extension) character traits and values such as cooperation, patience, humility, compassion, and teamwork.

Some of the misunderstandings that the Rollerbots encounter are showcased in my paintings of landmarks and Rollerbots. The first two paintings are depictions of homes designed by and for Thomas Jefferson, who was the father of the Declaration of Independence as well as an inventor, writer, and scientist. Monticello is widely known as Jefferson's home. However, Poplar Forest, his summer retreat is not as well known.

These paintings are in matching ornate gilded frames. The buildings are depicted as they stand today and have been painted from reference photographs I took during recent visits to each site. The paintings are depicted as "blue chip" type art that would be hung in a very elegant museum. It is only as one looks more closely at the painting that he or she will notice two Rollerbots in each of them, which is something out of the ordinary.

Upon even further inspection of the first painting, (Fig.89) the viewer will notice that AJ7, the male Rollerbot, is presenting a mound of Jello to AJ3, the female Rollerbot (Fig. 90). The painting is entitled: ***"Bring me a mound of Jello, meet me at Monticello . . . Yup! I can see where you got confused."*** The painting is once again playing on the idea of the misunderstandings the Rollerbots encounter in the human culture. The painting goes against everything about a blue chip painting, even in the extremely wordy title.

This signifies bringing art and culture to the masses—even to young children.

The second painting is based on the same premise with the two Rollerbots now at Jefferson's Summer retreat during the winter (Fig. 91). They are exploring the premises when an elk approaches AJ3, and she begins to stroke his majestic mane (Fig.92). Just about that time, a bald eagle lands on Jefferson's house, and it catches AJ7's attention. This time AJ3 is the one who misunderstood and utters (the title of the painting), ***"Now I can see why this is a Popular Forest!"***. . .***"Uh... that's Poplar my love!"*** is AJ7's response. Again, this is a wordy title that is aimed toward children. The idea is that adults can appreciate the elegance and majesty of these paintings—one may even say they could be placed in some very exclusive homes—while the children can enjoy the humor while learning historical facts.

The third painting is done in a mixed media style to create the underwater effect and is entitled ***Underwater Exploration*** (Fig. 93). The Rollerbots are now underwater, and in their exploration escapades, they have run into an underwater ruin. They are greeted by sea creatures who are not threatened by their presence. The painting raises questions about how the ruins got there, who built it, when or why. It even leads to Biblical discussions regarding the flood and whether this civilization could have been destroyed in the flood. This painting is designed to engage critical thinking for young children or even for adults to engage a conversation with their kids.



Fig.89 (above) Framed painting of Monticello entitled *"Bring me a mound of Jell-O, meet me at Monticello . . . Yup! I can see where you got confused."*

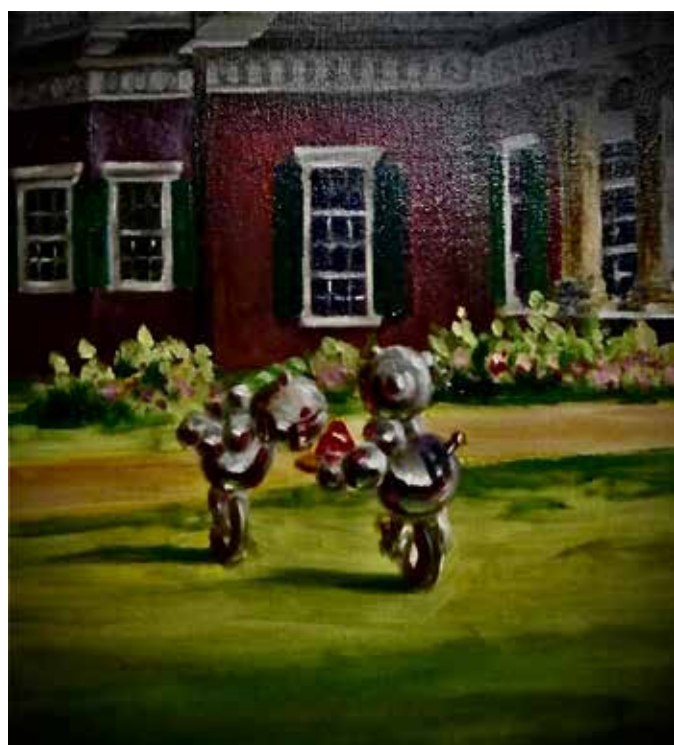


Fig.90 (left) Close-up of Monticello painting showing Rollerbot AJ7 holding a mound of Jell-O after mis-hearing the instructions "Meet me at Monticello."



Fig.91 (above) Framed painting of Monticello entitled "Now I can see why this is a Popular Forest!" "Uh... that's Poplar my love!"



Fig.92 (left) Close-up of Poplar Forest painting showing Rollerbot AJ3 petting the elk and Rollerbot AJ7 noticing the eagle perched above them. Taking all this in, AJ3 responds that she can understand why the place is called "Popular," having mistaken the name of the landmark."



Fig.93 *Underwater Exploration.*

Character Development: Elite 7

Throughout the Visual Process, the Elite 7 and Professors have been redeveloped and modernized. These characters are inclusive in their portrayals of different ethnicities and cultures as well as physical, intellectual, developmental, and even learning disabilities. Each character is in a heroic stance to portray a superhero image in sports and academics with each Elite 7 character dressed in one of their sports uniforms (Fig. 94).

The two physically disabled characters have steampunk-inspired prosthetics that also utilize modern technology. The term Steampunk is defined in the online dictionary as “a style of design and fashion that combines historical elements with anachronistic technological features inspired by science fiction.”

The members of this group of characters are from diverse recognizable cultures or countries, including Native American, African, Norse, Asian, and European. They have all achieved successes in athletics, sports, and business through hard work and determination.

They also have a devotion to God the Father and understand that throughout history oppression, slavery, and the taking of land has happened since the time of Adam and Eve due to sin and separation from God the Father. They recognize that our society’s problems are not going to be cured by representatives or government supported organizations. Rather, the Elite 7, as Christians, must demonstrate an alternative way of living that attempts to practice Biblical principles for the Glory of God.



Fig.94 The Elite Seven Group.

Professor Judah Matthias Ontiveros



Age:45

Ethnicity: Inuit from Yukon Territory

Sports:Triathlon

Education:MA, PhD in Art History: Italian, Flemish, Egyptian, & Native American

Achievements: US Olympic Gold & Silver Medalist: Triathlon; Ironman Triathlete

Misc:Investor; Self-made millionaire with his wife Jessica.
Co-founder of *Sapphire Palace of Historical Culture and Knowledge*.

Married to Prof. Jessica Lee

Professor Jessica Lee Ontiveros



Age:41

Ethnicity: Hispanic/Filipina

Sports:Volleyball

Education:MBA in Business Management; MA in English Literature;
PhD in Economics

Achievements: US Olympic Gold Medalist: Volleyball;

Misc:Investor; Self-made millionaire with husband Judah; Has Christian orphanages in Nepal, Mexico, Korea, & US;

Co-founder of *Sapphire Palace of Historical Culture and Knowledge*.

Married to Prof. Judah Matthius

Professor Luke Shaka Anotidaishie



Age:34

Ethnicity:African (Direct descendant of the Great Chief Shaka Zulu);
Born in England

Sports: Track & Field (Javelin; Triple Jump)

Education:MA, PhD in Art History: Italian, Flemish, Egyptian, & Native
American

Achievements: British Olympic Track & Field

Misc:Born in England; Moved to Caribbean at age 13

Boyfriend to Prof. Riley Hunter

Professor Riley Hunter García



Age:34

Ethnicity:Peruvian (Inca Indian descent)

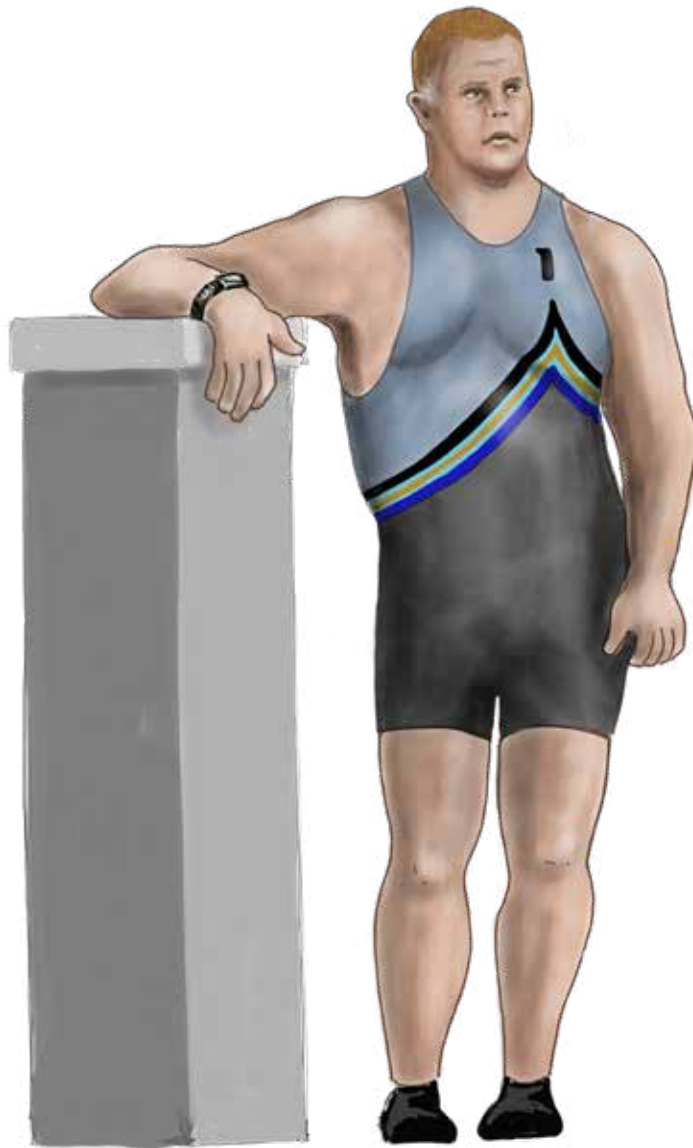
Sports: Soccer

Education:MA in Egyptian History; MA in African History; MA in Roman History; MA in Greek History;
PhD in Anthropology & Archaeology; PhD in Ancient Cultures, Meso & South American

Achievements: Multi-lingual: Spanish, Inca dialect, Greek, Latin, Arabic, & English

Girlfriend to Prof. Luke Shaka

#1 - Larry Willis Howard



Age: 41

Ethnicity: *Irish*

Sports: Track & Field (Hammer throw and Shot Put)

Education: BA in World History; BA in US History

Achievements: Special Olympic Record holder for Hammer Throw and Shot Put

Misc: He is a Savant with extraordinary ability to recall dates, times, and events. Highly respected by other members who voted to make him team member #1. Oldest team member.

#2 - Michaela Dakota Royle



Age: 21

Ethnicity: British (Born in Manchester, England)

Sports: Gymnastics; Dance; Surfing

Education: BS, PhD in Anatomy & Physiology; MA Physics;
BFA, MFA Dance Performance

Achievements: US Olympic Gymnastics Team; Dance Teacher at Juilliard

Misc: Graduated High School at age 15; Excels Academically and Physically by combining Anatomy, Dance, and Physics in relation to each other; Loves Classical Music; Loves drawing old cartoons.

Engaged to Thaddeus

#3 - Centauri "Dancing Fawn" Aviano



Age: 24

Ethnicity: Native American (Chumash Nation)

Sports: Soccer; Track & Field

Education: BS in Psychology; BS in Business;
MBA in Accounting & Economics

Achievements: US Olympic Soccer Team; Nationals for Track & Field
(100M, 100M Hurdles, Triple Jump, & Javelin)

Misc: Plays Violin and Flute; Sings; has an aptitude for numbers;
can multitask up to 20 projects; has almost perfect recall

Married to Monaco

#4 - Victoria Isabella DelToro



Age: 24

Ethnicity: Spanish (Born in Spain)

Sports: Track & Field (Javelin);

Education: BS in Mathematics, MAT Teaching; MA in Astronomy

Achievements: Spain Olympic & Paralympic Track & Field Team for Javelin

Misc: Multi-lingual: Spanish, English, Latin, Japanese, & Hebrew; Loves Chess, Decoding, Sudoku, Cryptograms, and mathematical equations; Born without left arm; utilizes Steampunk inspired mechanical above elbow prosthetic

Married to Eric

#5 - Thaddius Van Reynolds



Age: 25

Ethnicity: Norse (Descendant of Vikings)

Sports: Ice Hockey; Bobsled; Luge; Curling

Education: BS, MS in Roman History;
PhD in North American History

Achievements: Norway Olympic Ice Hockey Team;
National Luge Team; National Curling Team

Misc: Loves Classical Music & Opera;
Tough exterior with a soft and sensitive heart

Engaged to Michaela

#6 - Eric Jin Kobayashi



Age: 31

Ethnicity: Asian (Japanese (Paternal) & Korean (Maternal)); Born in Japan but moved to America.

Sports: Archery; Shooting; The Art of Sword Fighting

Education: BA in History; MA in Art History; MA in South American History; PhD in Japanese & Far East History

Achievements: Japan Olympic and Paralympic Teams for Archery; World Record Holder in Shooting & Archery

Misc: Born without right leg; Utilizes Steampunk inspired mechanical above knee prosthetic

Dating Victoria (met at Paralympics)

#7 - Monaco "Strong as an Eagle" Adriano



Age: 37

Ethnicity: Native American (Apache Nation)

Sports: Swimming, Sprint Paddler (Kayak); Lacrosse; Water Polo

Education: BFA, MFA in Studio Arts;

MAT in Teaching, Secondary

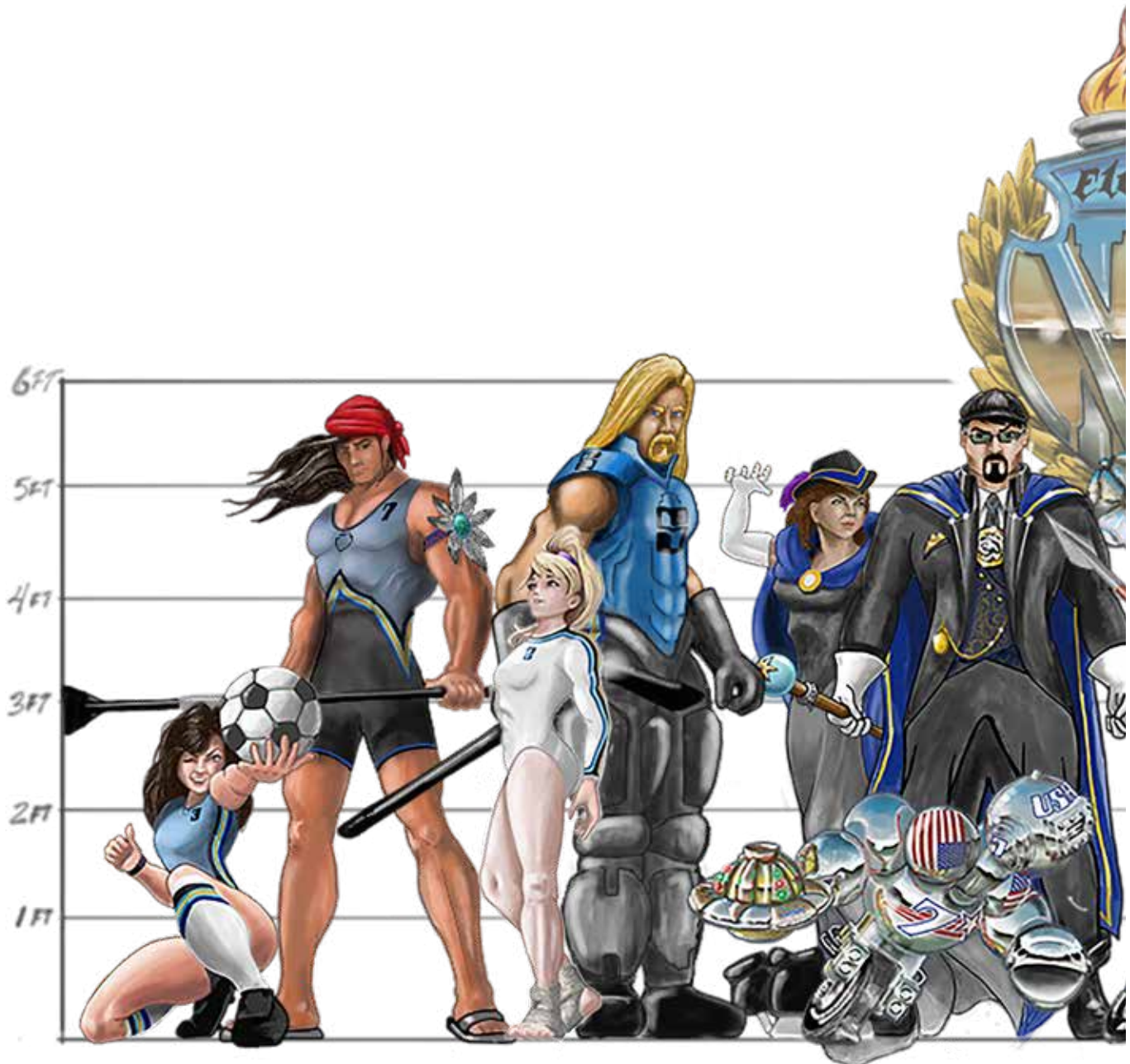
PhD in Art History (Italian & Flemish Renaissance)

Achievements: US Olympic Sprint Canoe/Kayak Team; National Team for Swimming; Lacrosse Travel Team

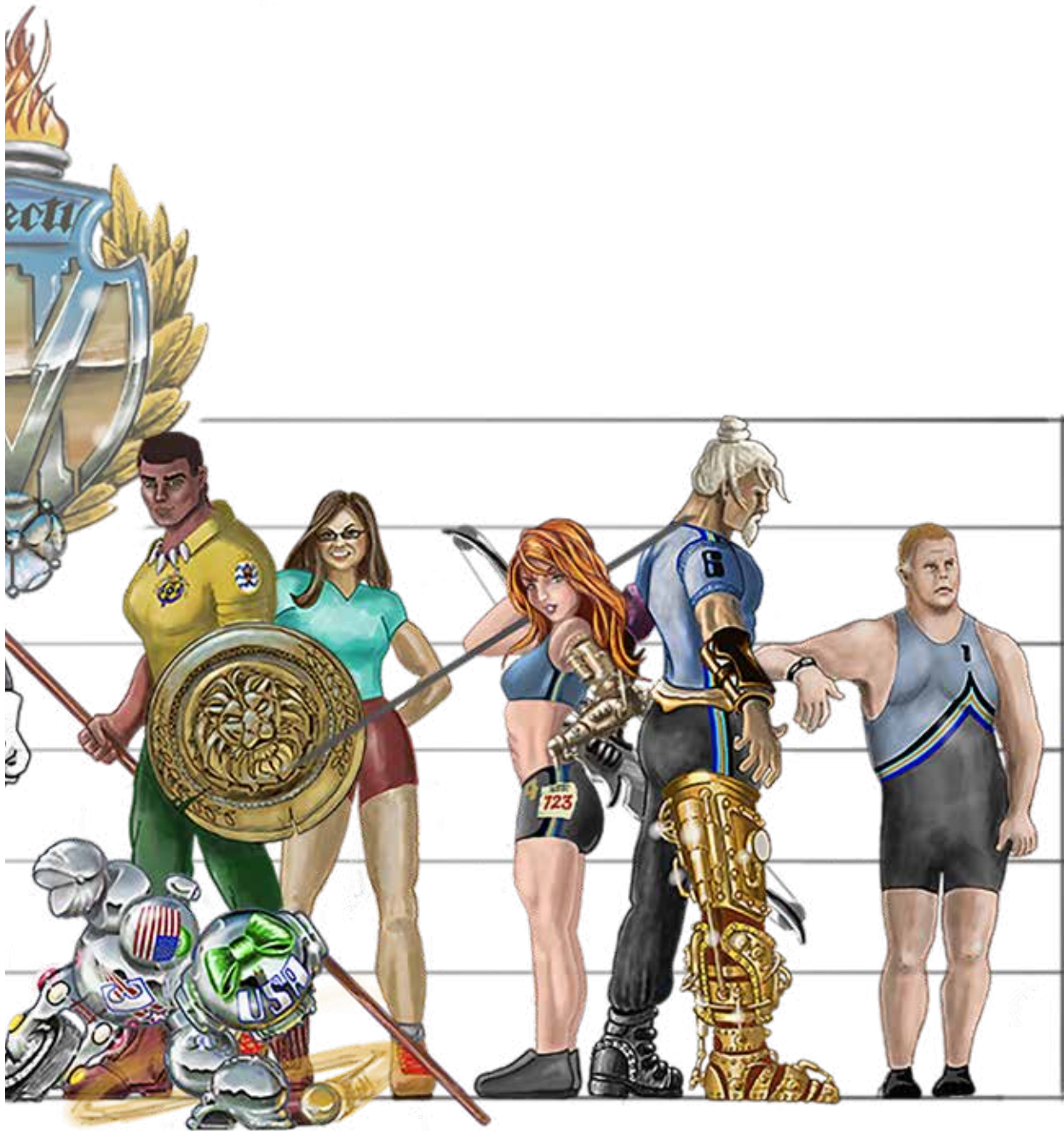
Misc: Learning Disabilities: Dyslexia, Auditory Processing Disorder; Global, Visual Learner; Very Creative; Jokester

Married to Centauri

Height Chart of the Elite 7



Team Members and the Professors



Infusion of Liberal Arts Education

So often schools and educators have excluded art history from the elementary and secondary educational system or have watered it down to just a simple footnote within lessons. Therefore, it is no surprise that when students get to the college or university level of education, they do not understand the importance of connecting art history with other subjects or how it has affected the way we all live today. Recently my mixed media and ceramics instructor at Liberty University, Professor M. Stephen Glaze, was discussing with us that over the years many Christian symbols have been lost. These symbols and the meaning behind them could be a great learning tool for making a connection between scientific evidence of creation and the historical connection of archaic civilizations and Biblical historical events.

In the studies of the antiquities, it is easy for students to accept without question the information with which they are presented as “facts” either because they just want to get through the lesson, or they do not know enough to even consider another alternative. This is where the third group of characters known as the Librarians of Historical Culture and Knowledge (Librarians) come into play. For example, when studying ancient structures, the characters will promote critical thinking by raising questions about how the construction could have happened without the assistance of modern tools. They can point out that evidence shows that some stones

have been melted together, and in other cases stones that weigh 8 to 15 tons, were brought from one location hundreds of miles to another location, as with Stonehenge. They could show shafts in the Pyramids of Giza that were cut with such precision and such accuracy that it would seem to require more than a crude hammer and chisel to make these accurate lines of symmetry. Exposing children to these artifacts and cultures in a non-threatening, fun environment by way of friendly cartoon characters in the form of artifacts themselves may help to activate the curiosities of the children and ignite their desire to learn more about ancient sites, objects, and symbols.

I have engaged in conversations with several of my colleagues in the fields of Apologetics and Biblical history regarding the time Joseph was taken into Egypt and if it could have been about the time the Pyramids of Giza were built. Most Bible scholars, however, believe the pyramids were built hundreds of years after the time of Joseph. It is still interesting to consider the impact Joseph had on Egypt and whether God could have given them advanced knowledge to build the pyramids. The Librarians would seek to make similar parallels to scripture through scientific and informative research and present these hypotheses to the children watching within the context of the storyline. It could happen. We just have to know how to present this hypothesis.

My painting entitled *The Little Red Schoolhouse* is unique in that it depicts the interaction between humans and the Rollerbots (Fig. 95). The building depicted in this painting is a schoolhouse in Southern California that has become an official state landmark. This painting illustrates teachers and students engaged in active learning. In the bottom left of the painting (Fig. 96), a teacher is explaining science by releasing a small rocket model that can be seen soaring past the waving flag. In the bottom right of the painting (Fig. 97), children are watching and listening to Shakespearean stories being

performed by students and Rollerbots up in the bell tower. Another teacher is demonstrating principles of physics as well as Asian culture using a Koi fish kite. Throughout the painting, children and Rollerbots are interacting while riding a bike, playing hopscotch, playing with a ball, and drawing with chalk on the sidewalk. This painting could be seen as setting the stage for the Elite 7 and Librarians to join in the learning and the fun and explain even more about the history of the building and demonstrate how different subjects work together to ensure that students receive a well-rounded liberal arts education.



Fig.95 *The Little Red Schoolhouse* depicts teachers and students engaged in active learning.

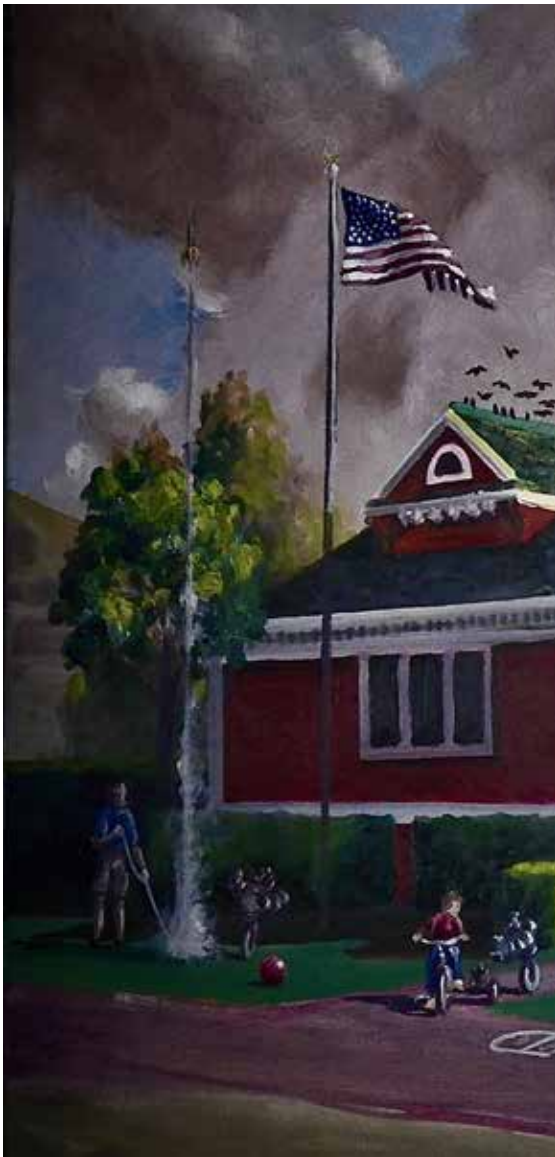


Fig.96 Close-up of the Schoolhouse painting demonstrates a teacher releasing a model rocket while teaching science as a Rollerbot looks on in amazement. The rocket can be seen shooting past the waving flag and startling the birds as they begin to fly away.

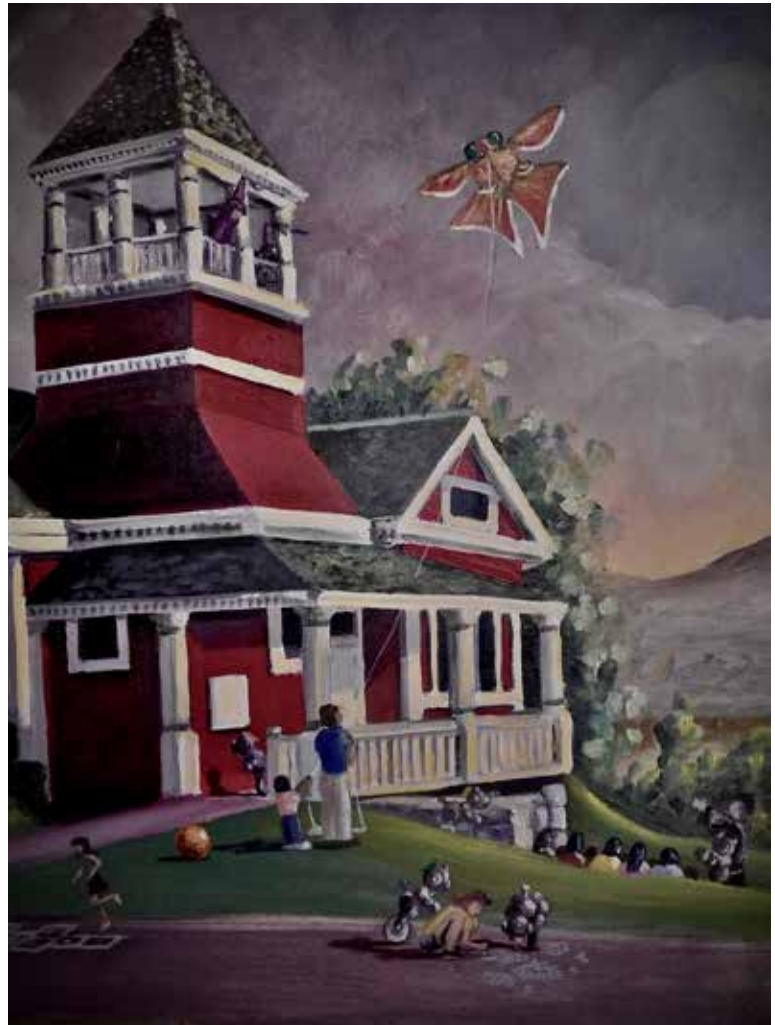


Fig.97 This close-up of the Schoolhouse painting shows a teacher, children, and Rollerbots on the hill listening to and watching other children and Rollerbots reenact Shakespearean scenes, including a Rollerbot and young girl up in the bell tower possibly reenacting the famous *Romeo and Juliet* scene.

Character Development: Librarians of Historical Culture and Knowledge

There are currently nine Librarians of Historical Culture and Knowledge (Fig.98): **Ombus**, the Egyptian bowl with feet; **Colossius**, the Olmec head; **Eastman**, the Easter Island Statue; three Gargoyles: **Luther** from Germany, **Wessex** from England and **Lafayette** from France; two Aryballos owls named **Olive** and **Otis**; and **Foo Foo Me Choo Choo**, the Chinese Foo Dog.

Other characters that may be introduced in the near future include an Indian Kachina Doll; a Totem Pole, where each character jumps off the shoulders of another character; a Chinese Parade Dragon; a group of horses from the Italian Renaissance Period; and an Aboriginal Gecko. Because these characters are artifacts, the list of possible characters could be nearly endless.



Fig.98 Group of Librarians of Historical Culture & Knowledge

Ombus



Egyptian Bowl with feet Represents the early age of Egypt

Ombus came about during the early Egyptian period when Egypt was two settlements: North and South. He happened to be around during the time Egypt became a world dominant Empire. Unfortunately, he has a tendency to hibernate which caused him to miss many historical events. This does not prevent him, however, from believing that schools are not teaching the full and accurate events of history. For example, he believes that because the Egyptians were extremely intelligent, they used more than a primitive hammer and chisel to construct their statues and structures. He cannot prove his theory, though, because he was hibernating during that time in history.

Collosius



Colossal Olmec head from Meso-America

An Olmec head woke up one day with his “fellow heads” wondering how they got there. As they started to venture out, they rolled from place to place, but because they are made of strong stone, they did not get damaged, so this became their mode of travel. However, the problem is that he can damage other things, such as sidewalks, streets, roads, and structures if he is not careful. One day he was not being particularly careful and accidentally demolished an abandoned house when he ran into it. He was feeling discouraged and upset, when Ombus happened to walk by. They became instant friends, and Ombus now carries Collosius on his back as they travel together. The two are now inseparable.

Eastman



Easter Island Head (and body) in desperate need of a tan

Eastman found himself, along with his family and friends, half-buried on Easter Island. He does not know how long he was like that, but after waking from their slumber they unburied themselves. However, they soon discovered they were all in desperate need of a tan from the neck down. Eastman ventured off the island to find out who he was. The tribal council appointed him and gave him his great title. Along the way, he met Olive and Otis who guided him to the Sapphire Palace.

Lutter



Gargoyle

Represents the Gothic period in Germany

Through the years, gargoyles have been portrayed as evil beasts when they were originally designed to fight evil. They each defend and teach within the physical and spiritual world.

Wessex



Gargoyle Represents the Gothic period in England

Wessex carries a Sapphire Cross that weighs three tons. However, to a believer, including the gargoyles, the cross is as light as if it were made of styrofoam.

Lafayette



Gargoyle

Represents the Gothic period in France

The Gargoyles' claw feet can rip evil spirits into oblivion. Their hands are softer and cleaner than anything of this world. They are used to comfort those in pain.

Otis & Olive



Male and Female Aryballos Greek Owls

The two Aryballos Greek owls saw Greece at its height of its greatness to the fall of the Empire. However, they were not around when Greece first began as a settlement in Italy, but they have heard the stories. They also saw the beginning of the Roman settlement and saw the rise and fall of Rome. Olive and Otis are the connection between the Rollerbots, Elite 7, and the Librarians. They serve as guides to and from the Sapphire Palace.

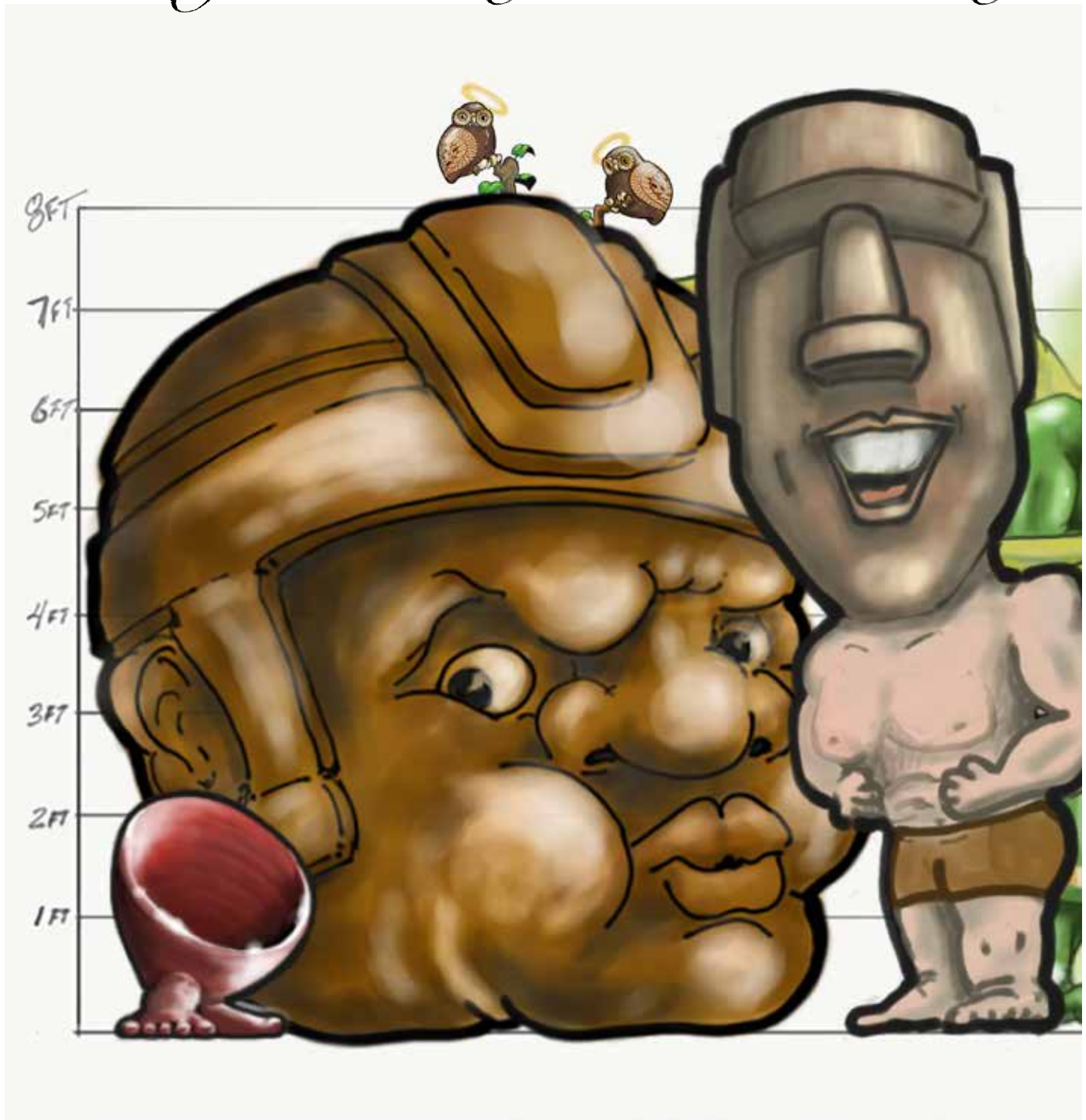
Foo Foo Me Choo Choo



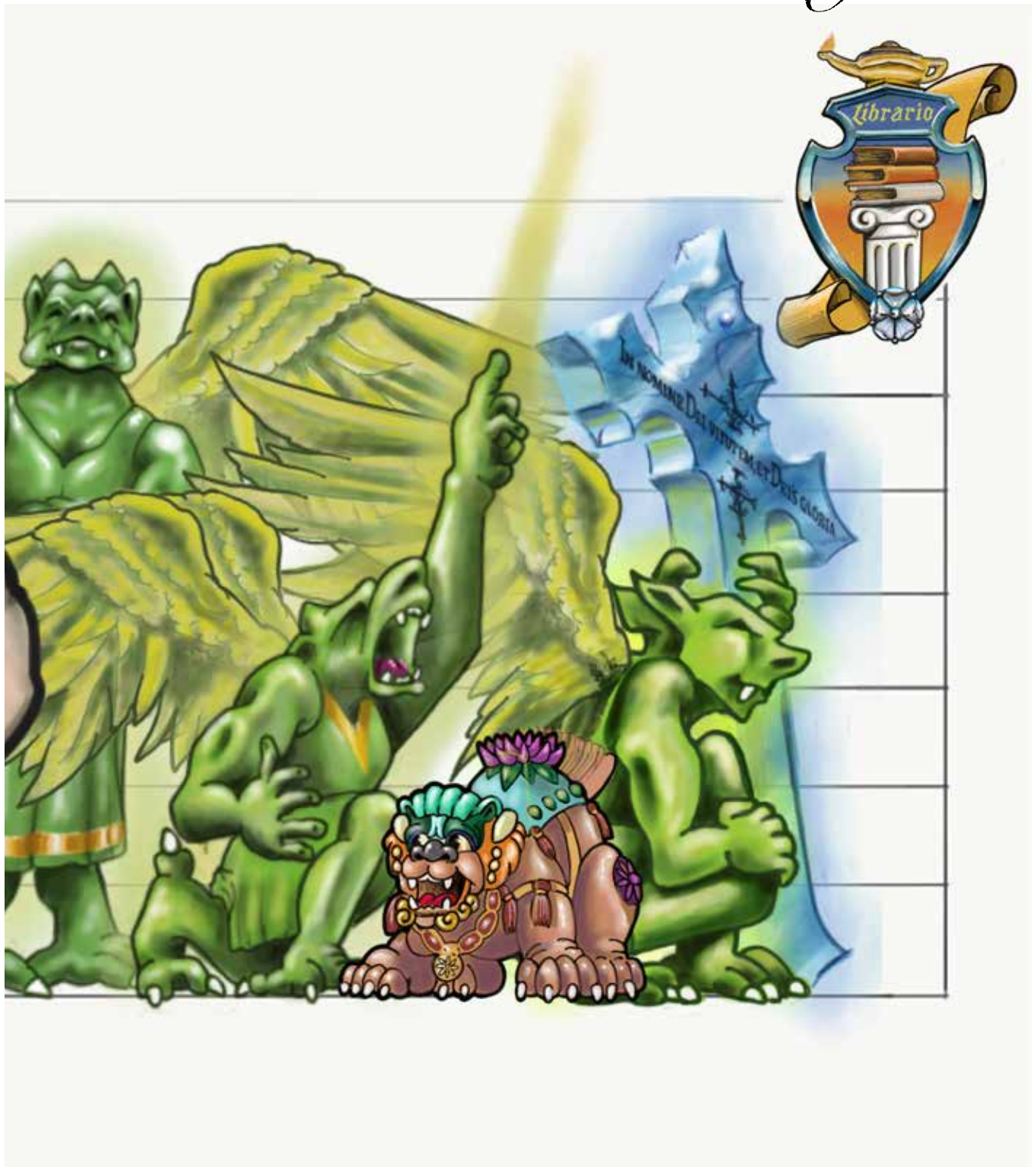
Chinese Foo Dog Represents the Art of the Far East

The Chinese Foo Dog was designated as a protector; however, Foo Foo was curious about learning. He always wants to know what, where, when, and who. He is fascinated not just with his own Chinese culture but all cultures around the world. He received the blessing of a Foo Dog Master to explore and learn. He learned when to run and when to stand and defend. He is the Guardian of the Librarians in the physical world.

Height Chart of the Librarians of



Historical Culture and Knowledge



Fantasy vs. Reality

As was shown in the literature review, violence seen on television by young children can affect their behavior and have negative effects on them later in life (Strasburger & Wilson). Parents, child psychologists, and educators are concerned that even seemingly harmless violence portrayed in humorous fashion may result in children not understanding the negative consequences that occur and may not be able to separate the difference between cartoon violence and real violence (Nathanson & Cantor). It seems that children have been so exposed to humor with violence that this is the only way to capture the child in the world of animation. Even Disney animated programming has some kind of violence that deals with an antagonist versus a protagonist, such as in *The Lion King*, *The Little Mermaid*, and even *Snow White*, who dies but ultimately comes back to life with a kiss of Prince Charming.

In order to address this issue, there must be a separation between the animation of humans and fictional characters. The Librarians are not bound by human characteristics, so they can do stunts that would harm human characters. This is similar to how Warner Brothers' Wile E. Coyote could be crushed without being killed or permanently injured.

The Elite 7 are a group of human characters who are scholars and athletes. Playing sports in an aggressive and dramatic way can inflict pain

and suffering. Just growing and developing can create pain. Defeat can create disappointment and heartache. The Elite 7 will be able to demonstrate these moments and express these feelings while also staying optimistic and showing that life is also full of happy and fun moments. Children will be able to identify with these human characters and the truths demonstrated.

Children also identify with fantasy or fictitious characters like the Librarians. Since these characters are ancient artifacts that have come to life, they are not made from flesh and bone but from stone or other harder substance. Therefore, these characters can withstand more than that of their counterparts the Elite 7. Because they have stood the test of time, they can have humorous falls or suffer "injuries" that do not harm these characters, similar to how Wile E. Coyote could withstand numerous drops of the anvil on his head or fall off the cliff in Warner Brothers cartoons.

The Librarians characters also know that their type of humor and antics cannot be played on the characters of the Elite 7. The Elite 7 know there is no way they could participate in their kind of action, and that is portrayed and explained to the children in the audience, as well. An example of this is Sports. In a football game, we see a clash of athletes taking some hard hits and hard falls, but we know the protection that the

athlete is wearing is protecting these athletes. However, that same protective pads and gear would not protect an athlete who tried to tackle a car. The athletes would literally be killed. This would be the same principle with the Librarians and the Elite 7.

Some of the humor that would be used with the Librarians would not be used with the Elite 7, and again that truth would be emphasized in the animated program. Thus, we can produce programming that would include silly falls, tumbles, and accidents that they can come out laughing about, while the Elite 7 look on in awe and even sometimes laugh about, as well. This will help children viewing the program to distinguish between fantasy and reality in the animated programming,

The Rollerbots, who are the bridge between the Elite 7 and the Librarians, help to be a bit of both worlds. They have the ability to play and move at the level of the Librarians, without being injured or harmed, yet they can be as sensitive, sentimental, and compassionate as humans, or as those of the Elite 7. They are living beings that have a metal or chrome look to them, but they feel soft to the touch. This creates a juxtaposition between their exterior being tougher than the strongest element we know of here on earth yet as soft and comforting as skin to the touch. This is contrary to any logic here on earth, and makes one wonder where they came from, which is a mystery that may never be revealed.

Retired teacher Rosalie Carabajal, who taught preschool for 46 years, recently expressed her experiences regarding the *Rugrats* in relation to preschool children. She stated that they would occasionally show cartoons to the children but most of the time it would be educational shows about counting or the alphabet, such as *Mr. Rogers Neighborhood* or *Sesame Street*. She said that there were times that some of the other teachers would play *Rugrats*, which she did not feel comfortable with. She recognized that there was some fun subject matter with the *Rugrats* being mischievous, but the way they were drawn “almost seemed demonic.” Some of the children were even frightened by the way they looked and would cry. In her opinion, this cartoon was not appropriate for children of this age (Carabajal).

I was able to present my characters and some of the storylines to Carabajal. Her opinion was that the development and detail in the drawings would cause children to gravitate toward the program and the characters. She believes that the idea of having the three groups of characters would help the children separate the fantasy of the Librarians from the reality of the Elite 7. She loved the idea of the children learning about the past and historical cultures in a playful way. She also felt the children would love and identify with the Rollerbots’ compassion and ability to be involved in the antics of the Librarians while understanding the frailty of the “Pedxings.” She even expressed that she believed children would love to see the characters as three-dimensional toys, statues, or action figures (Carabajal).

Biblical Depiction of Genders & Marriage

The current trend in our nation is to normalize homosexual and transgender behaviors and to promote the idea of gender neutrality, gender fluidity, or non-binary designations under the guise of eliminating discrimination. This agenda is finding its way even into children's programming as with shows such as *Arthur*, *Adventure Time*, and *Steven's Universe* as described in Chapter 2. While the Elite 7 characters do seek to be inclusive, the characters will portray distinct genders as designed by God and described and portrayed throughout the Bible.

The Bible clearly states both in the Old and New Testaments that there are two genders, male and female, and that marriage is between a man and woman. The first two chapters in the Bible (Genesis 1 & 2) clearly show that man (Adam) was created in God's image from the dust of the ground and that woman (Eve) was created from one of Adam's ribs to be a helpmate for him. Matthew 19:4-6 (NKJV) states, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." God not only clearly defines marriage as between man and woman, but also defines homosexual behavior as unnatural and a sin (Romans 1:26-27; Leviticus 18:22). As stated during the Visual Process (Chapter 3), the Elite 7 characters and the

Rollerbots have distinct physical characteristics to distinguish male from female, and they also will portray traditional Biblical relationships between male and female characters.

The two life-sized (3 feet high) Rollerbots are part of my visual solution because they allow the viewer to see a male and female Rollerbot up close and notice the differences between them. The first obvious differences they may see are that the female AJ3 has long eyelashes (Fig. 99) and a bow on the back of her head (Fig. 100).



Fig.99 Close-up of the life-sized female Rollerbot AJ3 showing her head. The eyelashes are represented on the mask with thin plastic leaves.



Fig.100 Close-up of the bow on the back of AJ3's head, which was constructed of Worbla over styrofoam, then painted green, her favorite color.

Upon further inspection one will notice that in the chest area between the two large spheres the females have a bust line, and the males do not. The stick shift is even different on the back of the large sphere that serves as the body. The female stick shift is an automatic (Fig. 101) while the male has a manual (Fig. 102)



Fig.101 The female stickshift is an automatic



Fig.102 The male Rollerbot's stickshift is a manual

Looking down further where the wheel connects to the body of the Rollerbot represents the “legs” of the Rollerbots. The male Rollerbot’s “legs” are blocky and much more utilitarian (Fig. 103),

whereas the females have a smooth shapely form to their “legs” (Fig. 104). These issues are important because children need to see how similar the Rollerbots are yet understand that they still have differences.



Fig.103 The male Rollerbots’ “legs” are blocky and utilitarian.



Fig.104 The female Rollerbots’ “legs” are more smooth and shapely.

Understanding the differences and similarities are important, especially in this time we are in where the culture is pushing ideas contrary to the Bible. Although we are alike in many ways, everyone is unique in some way, and male and females are created differently for specific purposes. Even without having to preach or address this subject directly, these differences

will be noticeable in the Rollerbots and Elite 7 characters.

Accompanying the life-sized Rollerbots (Fig. 105) is a replica of Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, which I have painted on wood panel with oil to scale and to color and proportion. While it hangs on the wall, the two life size Rollerbots AJ7 and AJ3 stand in front of her (Fig. 106). AJ3 is intently



Fig.105 Life-sized Rollerbot statues.

studying her with her hand behind her back while AJ7 reads the flyer which has information about the painting and the artist. This piece is entitled ***She's beautiful, but what's the big deal?*** Again, this is to invoke conversation.

Most children have heard of the *Mona Lisa*, and some may even know who executed the painting. While they know it is an important old painting, they most likely do not understand the significance.



Fig.106 Life-sized Rollerbots studying the Mona Lisa (replica) trying to decipher why she's such a big deal.

Rollerbot Height Comparison



Scale gives us an image of how big or small things are in our world. This is even true in animation. To give scale to the Rollerbots they have been made to scale as deliverables. The Rollerbots themselves are about 3 feet tall. Originally, they were only to be 3 inches tall; however, after

observing R2-D2 from the motion picture *Star Wars* it became evident to me that the Rollerbots would be much more effective in interacting with children and adults alike at that height. Two years later when Lucas released *The Empire Strikes Back*, he introduced another small 3-foot

as compared to Yoda & R2D2



tall character named Yoda. This character was not only a dominate warrior knight in his time, this 900-year-old character was knowledgeable and wise. This was verification for me to place the Rollerbots at this height. Children could relate to the size of the characters and not feel

intimidated. In fact, when Rollerbots approach children they immediately wag their stick shift like a puppy that wags its tail. They will place their hands behind their back, lean their face forward, and slightly tip their heads down as in a submissive stance.

Rubble



モンスター

TM



Rollerbots AT7 & AB



Married

Professors Judah & Jessica



Married

Professors Luke & Riley



Married

Monaco & Centauri



Married

Thaddens & Michaela



Engaged

Eric & Victoria



Dating

Larry & the Rollerbots



Best Friends

Animation & Mixed Media Model

It would seem every superhero has had a place of retreat or someplace to regroup and make plans. Batman has the bat cave below Wayne Manor. Superman has his fortress of solitude. Iron man has Stark Industries, and of course Wonder Woman has her home island of Themyscira Island. So, it would be no surprise that the Elite 7 and the Librarians of Historical Culture and Knowledge would have their place of study and research, as well. For them it is the Sapphire Palace of Historical Culture and Knowledge (Fig 107).

The Sapphire Palace is extremely significant in the story of all three groups of characters. The Rollerbots were first introduced to the Sapphire Palace by Monaco and Centauri following a traumatic incident that had occurred. This incident serves as the proposed pilot episode of a future Rollerbot cartoon as it is the catalyst for the introduction of all the characters to the Rollerbots. This incident is portrayed in the following storyboards, with the first four frames animated with Adobe Animate as a brief introduction to the Rollerbots during the thesis presentation.

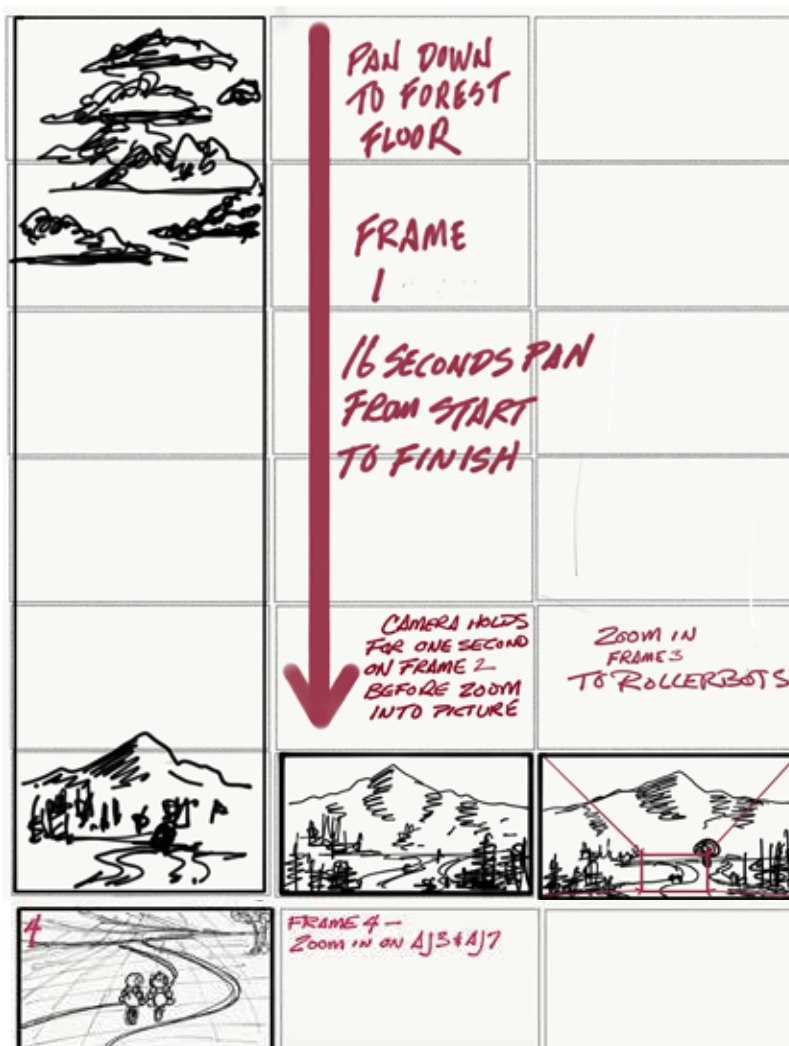


Fig.107 Sapphire Palace of Historical Culture and Knowledge

1 EXT. OPEN LAND WITH ROLLING HILLS - MIDDAY

We OPEN on clouds in a blue sky. The camera slowly pans down to show a beautiful scene of a mountain in the background with rolling green hills and trees on either side of a path. We can see two small figures on the path for just a moment before the camera zooms in for a closeup of our two Rollerbots, AJ7 & AJ3.

As the camera pans down, we can overhear the dialogue between the two Rollerbots.



AJ7

Uh...I'm feeling a little nervous.

AJ3

About what, my love?

AJ7

About this whole adventure. Do you think we should keep following Olive & Otis?

AJ3

Of course, my Smokes! It's a great adventure!

AJ7

(anxiously) But what if this is the wrong decision? What if we fail? Or get lost?

AJ3

We won't fail. We're doing this together.

AJ7

Thank you, my Cakes! What would I do without you?!

AJ3

Oh, you'd manage. But I'm glad we're together.

AJ7

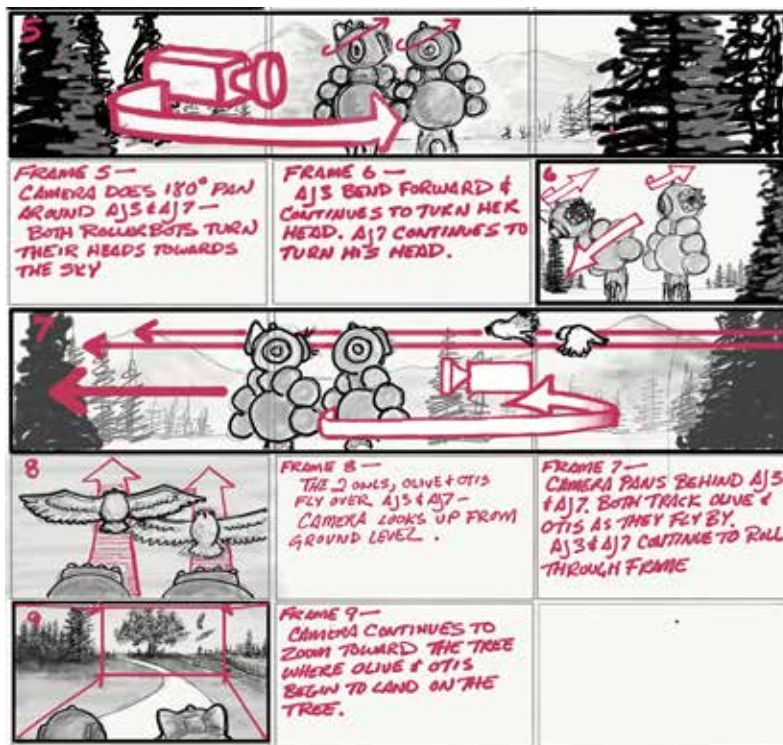
(feeling more confident) Alright! Let's keep cruisin'.

Screen shots of Animation frames 1-4.



Additional frames of proposed pilot scene that can be animated in the future.

Suddenly the Bots turn their heads toward the sky. AJ3 bends forward as they both continue to turn their heads as though following something in the sky. AJ3 is upright again, and we can now see the backs of the Rollerbots as two small owls, OTIS and OLIVE are shown to be flying above and in front of the Bots. The owls fly across the screen as the Rollerbots continue tracking them.



AJ3
Look over there! It's the GREAT
TREE they told us about.
AJ7
And it's near the RIVER.
(excitedly) We are going the right
way.

OLIVE & OTIS fly to GREAT TREE and sit on a branch.



	FRAME 12 - CUT: AJ7 & AJ3 ROLL UP TO OLIVE & OTIS PERCHED ON TREE	
	FRAME 13 - AJ7 & AJ3 BEGIN TALKING TO OLIVE & OTIS OVER SHOULDER SHOT	
	FRAME 14 - OVER THE SHOULDER of OLIVE & OTIS	
	FRAME 15 - BACK TO AJ7 & AJ3 OVER THE SHOULDER SHOT	
	FRAME 16 - FINAL OVER THE SHOULDER SHOT of OLIVE & OTIS	

OTIS
We have lead you to the GREAT TREE.
Do you still have doubts about this
adventure?

AJ7
(stammering) We'lllllll...uhhhh...

OLIVE
Sometimes adventures can seem scary
when we don't know exactly where
we're heading.

OTIS
And you just have to trust whoever
is leading you.

AJ7
Yeah, we did have some doubts...for
a while.

AJ3
But we worked through them
together. Right, my Smokes?

OTIS
Your faith is strong! Just keep
trusting!

OLIVE
And don't forget that we'll always
be looking out for you.

AJ7
But are you sure we can make it?

OTIS
Of course!

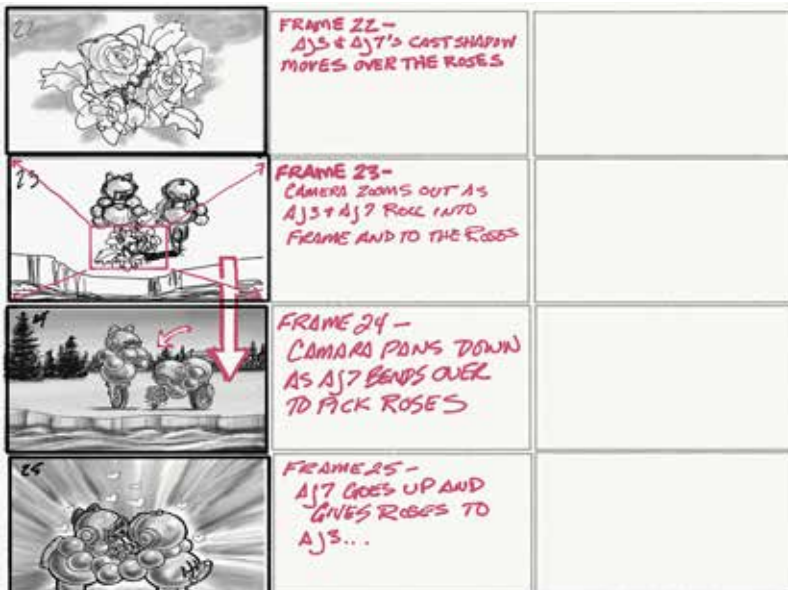
OTIS motions to the ROSES near the RIVER

	FRAME 17 - OLIVE & OTIS POINT TOWARD FLOWERS	
	FRAME 18 - ZOOM TO ROSES NEAR RIVER	
	FRAME 19 - AJ3 & AJ7 TURN TO EACH OTHER WITH AN AFFECTIONATE GAZE	
	FRAME 20 - AJ3 & AJ7 GAZE BACK TO THE ROSES	
	FRAME 21 - CUT: TIGHT SHOT OF ROSES THEN PULL OUT	

OTIS
Look at those ROSES over there.
They shouldn't be growing out here,
but there they are--beautiful and
strong. They are a symbol of how
your love for each other keeps you
strong.

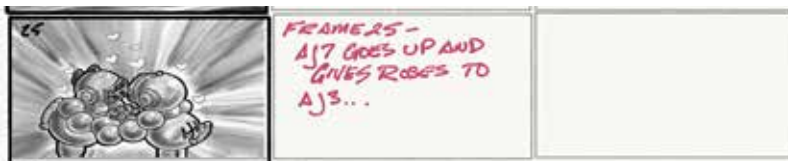
OLIVE
Go ahead and take them with you as
a reminder of the strength of your
love

As OLIVE and OTIS fly away, the Rollerbots ROLL over to the ROSES and AJ7 PICKS them.



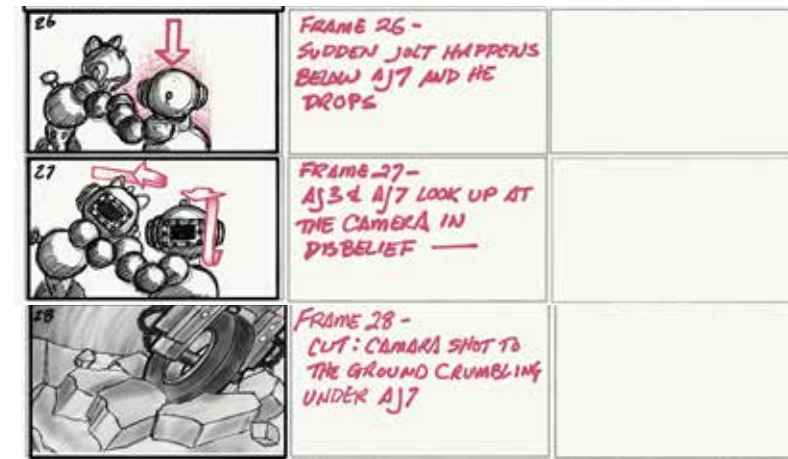
AJ7
(HANDING the ROSES to AJ3) These
are for you, my love, to thank you
for believing in me.

AJ3 takes the flowers and brings them up toward her face.



AJ3
(lovingly) Awww...

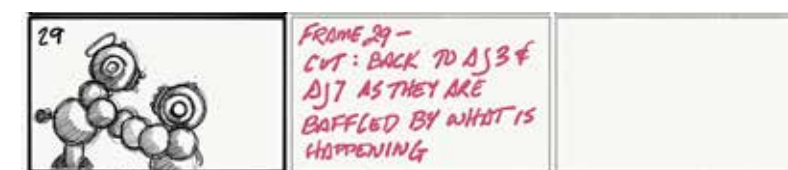
(SOUND OF GROUND CRUMBLING
BENEATH AJ7)



AJ7
Oh no!! I'm falling!

AJ3
(screaming) Nooooo! My Smokes!

AJ3 ROLLS toward AJ7 and holds out her arms



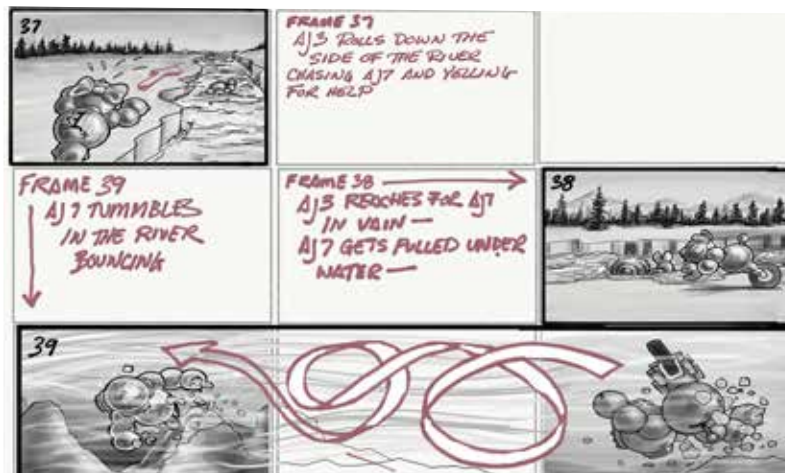


AJ3
Hurry and grab hold of me.
AJ7
I can't! I'm slipping! HELP!!!

(SOUND OF BIG SPLASH as
AJ7 hits the water)

AJ3
Hold on. I'm coming.

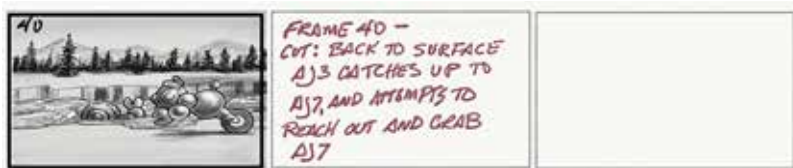
Olive and Otis fly over AJ3 and off to the right.
AJ3 ROLLS alongside the river yelling for help as AJ7 floats
downstream.



AJ3
I'm not fast enough! Someone...
anyone...please help!!

AJ7
(gurgling) H...he...help!!

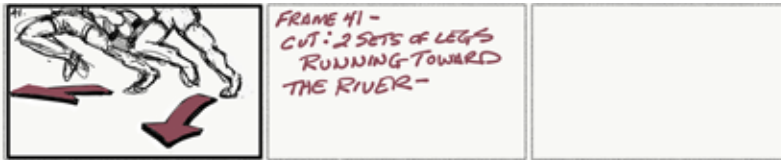
(SOUNDS OF AJ7 SPLASHING,
GURLING, AND METAL HITTING
THE ROCKS)



AJ3
(yelling) I'm here. Just hold on...

CUT TO

Suddenly a young man (Monaco) and woman (Centauri) are running toward the Rollerbots.



(SOUND OF RUNNING FEET in the distance but growing louder)

CUT TO

AJ3 is oblivious to the two humans and continues following AJ7 down river.



CENTAURI
Monaco, you rescue him. I'll take care of her.

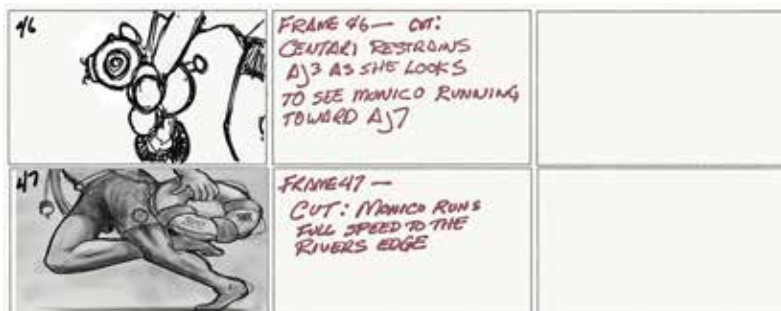
MONACO
Will do, Centauri.

AJ3
(shouting frantically) I'm coming in to get you, my love!

CENTAURI
Not so fast, little one

CUT TO

CENTAURI grabs AJ3 just as she is about to fall into the river.



CENTAURI
I've got you!

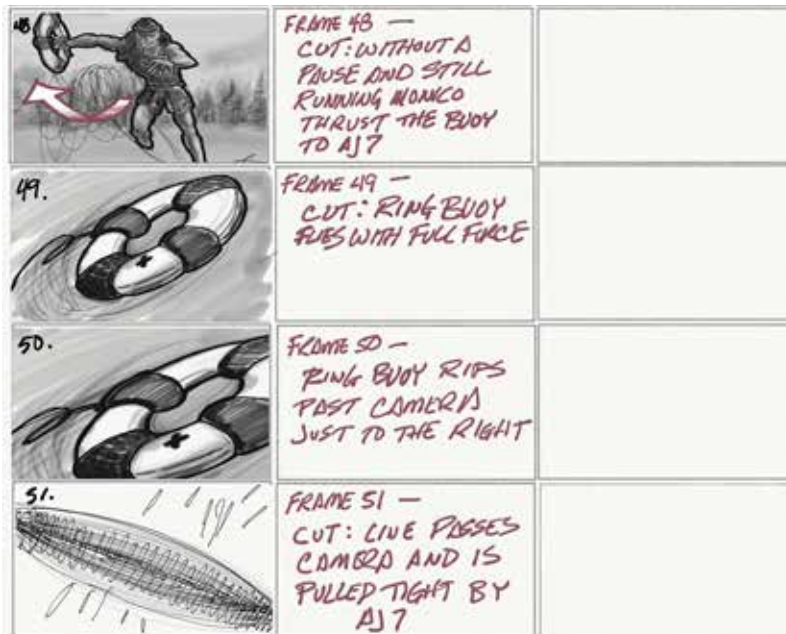
AJ3
(crying) NO!! I need to help.

CENTAURI
Don't worry. Monaco knows just what to do!

(SOUND OF FEET RUNNING as Monaco gets closer to AJ3.
SOUND OF MONACO PANTING from exertion.)

CUT TO:

MONACO is RUNNING. He GRUNTS as he THROWS the RING BUOY.



MONACO
Here! Grab this.

(SOUND OF BUOY FLYING through
the air)

(SOUND OF ROPE tightening)
MONACO
Don't worry little guy. I'll pull
you in.

AJ7
(stammering from exhaustion) Th...
th...thanks!

AJ7 GRABS the BUOY

CUT TO:

MONACO PULL IN AJ7

MONACO
That's it! Just one...more...tug!
(SOUND of MONACO PANTING)

MONACO PULLS AJ7 to SHORE and they both COLLAPSE onto the
ground completely exhausted.

AJ3 & CENTAURI RACE over to them.

AJ3
How can we ever thank you for saving
him?

CENTAURI
We're just happy we were here to
help.

MONACO
(weakly while smiling) Yeah! All in
a day's work.
(MONACO continues PANTING)

AJ7
But how did you even know how to
find us?

CENTAURI
(chuckling) Oh, a little bird told
us!

MONACO
Hey guys, why don't you both come
with us?!

CENTAURI
Yeah, we'll introduce you to some of
our friends.

AJ7
Sounds like a fun adventure. Right,
my Cakes?

AJ3
Sure does.

The four start walking down the path but AJ7 pauses at a
curious SIGN that reads "PED X-ING"

AJ7
Hey, what do you suppose that SIGN
means?!

MONACO
Don't worry little ones. We'll
explain it all when we get there.

FADE OUT

Fig.108 Final page of script

As you have read on the attached script (see Fig. 108 on previous page), Monaco and Centauri are leading Rollerbots AJ3 and AJ7 somewhere to meet their friends, but they do not reveal the location. The mysterious place they are taking them is the Sapphire Palace. Monaco and Centauri introduce the Rollerbots to the rest of the Elite 7 team members and the Professors. The Rollerbots, having already met and been guided by the owls Olive and Otis, are also introduced to the rest of the Librarians, who all live at the Sapphire Palace. The Rollerbots are then informed about the history of the Palace.

The Palace was founded by Professors Judah and Jessica Ontiveros, who are gifted businesspeople, investors, and Olympic athletes. Using their skills, they managed to reach levels of success that few manage to attain. Both Judah and Jessica know that they are not the rule to success but the exception. They both have a love for learning and preserving the past in the name of helping future generations. The Palace holds many awards on display along with many documents and works of art from all over the world. Some works are originals while others are replicas so close to the originals that even the world's greatest experts in the field of art history and artifacts would not be able to recognize the replications. The works are there for study and observation for people who could not travel overseas to see the originals.

The Sapphire Palace can be considered a vault, of sorts, that encompasses all the cultures of the past, recorded events that have changed the course of history, and discoveries that

have advanced mankind's knowledge and understanding. It includes even the dark and sad events that we must never forget as they have also helped to shape history. However, the Sapphire Palace is not just limited to the historical and cultural events of man but also includes other subjects such as the sciences, physics, astronomy, animal and plant life, as well as the arts of the past. The arts that have helped to shape our culture are not just the visual arts, but it also includes musical and performing arts.

Sports and athletics are also a major part of mankind's development that are included in the Sapphire Palace. Sports demonstrate teams working together for a common goal to achieve a level of perfection and to perform to their maximum level of competition. Sports extend all the way back to the antiquities of Greece, starting with the ancient Olympic Games. Wars were postponed so that these games could be performed. The ancient Romans performed sporting events in their mighty Circus Maximus, which even included fighting to the death. In any case, sporting events have been a major part of mankind's culture, which continues to present time. Today society gravitates toward major sporting events, including college and university football Bowl Games and professional Bowl Games such as the Super Bowl. Baseball has the World Series, Hockey the Stanley Cup, Soccer the World Cup, and Basketball the World Championship. Then there is the greatest culmination of all with the modern Olympic Games.

Because of the great significance of the Sapphire Palace in bringing all the characters together, it was important that I create a replica of a portion of it. The model that I have constructed as one of my deliverables represents just a small section, in fact just a fraction, of the Palace itself. The portion represented is the Museum within the Palace, and it features the Rollerbots, the Librarians, and the Elite 7 with the Professors, who all help in the research of history and culture.

The model consists of a floor with two walls so that the viewer can easily see the elements within the museum (Fig 109). The larger wall contains two hanging digital paintings, and the smaller wall contains one hanging digital painting. Each painting is of one of the groups

of characters, and they are framed by a very Baroque style frame that displays symbols that reflect the particular group displayed. Each frame was hand sculpted from Sculpey and has been baked and painted either gold or bronze.

The museum itself was constructed with foam core, that was hand painted with acrylic paint to resemble wooden wainscoting along the bottom. The baseboards, chair rail, and crown molding were purchased at a local hardware store. I stained them with acrylic paint and cut them to size and glued them onto the foam core to produce the look of an elegant museum or gallery. The floor was scored with a razor and painted with acrylic paint to resemble a checkered sapphire floor.



Fig.109 The model of the Museum with the Sapphire Palace consists of a floor and two walls so that the viewer can easily see all the elements from different angles.

The smaller wall contains a single painting displaying Rollerbots AJ7 and AJ3 playing saucerball (Fig. 110). Saucerball is a sport designed by and for the Rollerbots. It is a very fast and dangerous sport for humans, who are also known as “Pedxings” by the Rollerbots. The ball is a gold sphere moving at a minimum speed of 300 mph. If the Rollerbots get hit by this fast-moving ball, it is equivalent to a human being hit by a foam ball. However, this ball could inflict major damage to a human; thus, no human, no matter how skilled or protected, can play this sport.

The images on the frame are a symbolic reference to the Rollerbots. In the center at the top is a unicorn (Fig. 111), which represents purity and innocence. Although the Rollerbots are extremely wise and knowledgeable, they are naïve and curious about human actions, habits, and shortcomings that are not familiar to the Rollerbots. The two owls on either side of the unicorn (Fig. 112) represent wisdom and knowledge in the darkness. The strawberries at the bottom (Fig. 113) represent the perfect fruit of the spirit. They also happen to be the Rollerbots’ favorite food.



Fig.110 Rollerbots AJ7 & AJ3 playing their unique sport called Saucerball



Fig.111 The unicorn at the top center of the frame represents purity and innocence.



Fig.112 The owls on either side of the unicorn represent wisdom and knowledge in the darkness.



Fig.113 The strawberries at the bottom of the frame represent the perfect fruit of the spirit.

The larger wall contains two digital paintings. The first painting displays a group photo of the Elite 7 and the four Professors (Fig. 114). The frame is adorned with an historic old rose, which represents the “Rose of Sharon” as Jesus Christ. There are 7 roses (Fig. 115) that represent the Elite 7, who work with the Professors and founders of the Sapphire Palace. The roses also represent that each of these individuals are Christians, who have placed their faith in God the Father and have surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ.

The second painting on the larger wall is of the Librarians of Historical Culture and Knowledge (Fig. 116). The frame around the Librarians has a lion at the top in the center (Fig. 117). The lion in the Christian world represents courage,

boldness, and leadership. According to George Ferguson’s book *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*, ancient legend has it that a lion cub is born dead and three days later comes to life from the breath of the adult lion. This may be symbolic of how Jesus Christ died but three days later is brought back to life to defeat death.

I have carried this analogy into the stories of the Librarians in that each is an artifact of the past that was either buried or lost but then discovered again--dead in the past and brought to life in the present to represent the culture from which they came. Each frame has roses adorning the center image, which connects Christ to all the characters to glorify God the Father. Ad Dei Glorium: to God the Glory.



Fig. 114 Digital painting of the Elite 7 and Professors in frame



Fig.116 Digital painting of The Librarians of Historical Culture and Knowledge



Fig.115 Roses adorn each frame.



Fig.117 The Lion on the top of the frame symbolizes courage, boldness, and leadership.

Displayed on a pedestal mounted on the floor is a glass dome that contains the original Rollerbots (Fig. 118) that were created in 1979 and originally designed to be a comic strip called “Out of this World.” I made some minor repairs to their antennas and stickshifts using white and gray Sculpey. The original Rollerbots (Fig. 119) are displayed as the main focus of the Museum.

On the opposite side of the museum is another pedestal mounted on the floor with a glass dome containing a trophy called the Cup of the Crystal Rose (Fig. 120), awarded to champions of the Games of the Crystal Rose. The Games of the Crystal Rose is an event that is sponsored by the Sapphire Palace. It is even more demanding than that of the Olympic Games. To obtain the Crystal Rose, the athlete must obtain a level of

perfection beyond that of an Olympic athlete. The trophy was created with Sculpey that was baked and painted. Gold leaf was applied to the roses and medallion.

The pedestals were created by purchasing smaller blocks and wooden appliques that were also stained with acrylic paint and glued together. The glass domes were purchased at a local hobby store and glued to the top of the pedestals. Around the pedestals, I cut out rectangular portions of the floor so that Styrofoam pieces containing the arrangements of miniature grass and flowers could be sunken into the floor and covered (Fig. 121). I also purchased wood dowels of different sizes and created bases and caps of Sculpey for each to create ornate columns and pillars, which were painted to resemble marble (Fig. 122).



Fig.118 Rollerbots displayed on a pedestal



Fig.119 The original Rollerbots created in 1979



Fig.120 The Cup of the Crystal Rose



Fig.121 I arranged the grass and flowers in styrofoam pieces that were sunken into the floor so that they surrounded the display pieces.



Fig.122 Ornate columns and pillars were created from wood and Sculpey clay and painted to resemble marble.









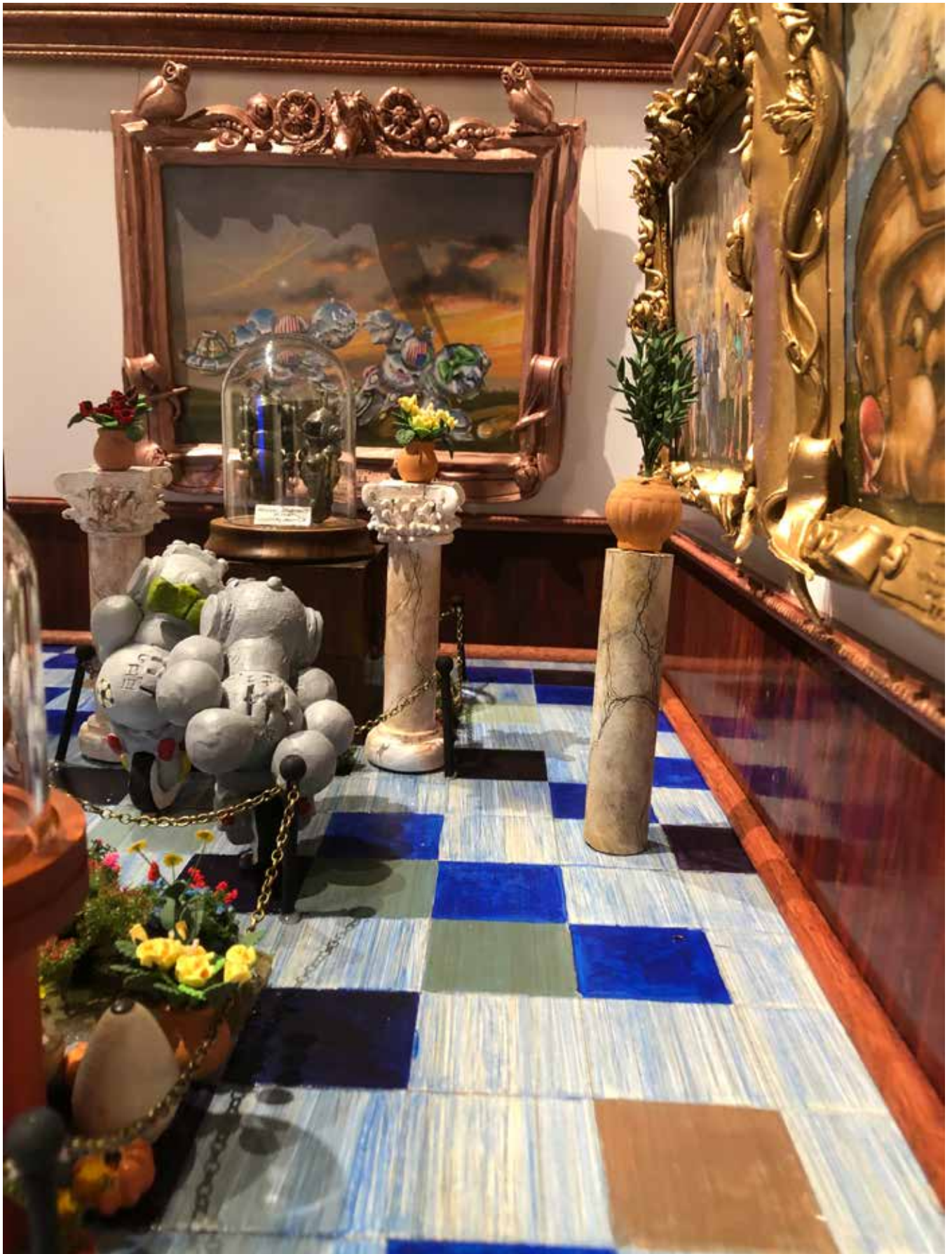














Conclusion

At the outset of this study, my aim was to discover and document how animation has evolved over the last five decades, the moral decadence with that genre of entertainment during that time, and how children have been affected. I also set out to research how a Christian message could be infused into a cartoon and how that cartoon could also be used as a learning tool in a fun, humorous, and imaginative way. The review of literature clearly presented studies that demonstrated the negative effects that watching violent content can have on young viewers (Habib & Soliman), including aggressive attitudes and behaviors (Strasburger and Wilson). I do not believe it is any surprise that the research also supported the hypothesis that children will tend to mimic the things that they see or hear. However, it was also shown that in order for children to learn significant pro-social behaviors from the programs they watch, the characters' words and actions must be consistent in promoting that behavior (Liss, Reinhardt, and Fredriksen).

In the last 10 years a strong push has been made to legitimize the LGBT+ agenda to our children with animated programming like *Steven Universe*, *Arthur*, and *Adventure Time*, which air on cartoon network and PBS, including gay and lesbian characters and same-sex marriages,

as was discussed in the literature review. With the current trend to normalize and legitimize this anti-Biblical behavior, there is a need for shows that will promote traditional values. The literature did show that Christian based shows such as *Davey and Goliath* and *VeggieTales* have been a popular alternative for Christian conservatives. However, these shows do not necessarily appeal to the non-religious viewers. However, we also examined the popularity of *The Chronicles of Narnia* movies, based on C.S. Lewis' novels, that contained subliminal symbols of Christianity woven into the storylines and the characters. This is the direction that I can see the Rollerbot cartoons heading.

Another aspect of the classic cartoons of the 1950s to the late 1970s was infusing academic or educational aspects within the storylines. *Dora the Explorer* and *Go, Diego, Go!* were animated programs by Nick Jr that were popular throughout the 2000s. They had a concept of discovering new places and learning about geography; however, this program was geared to young children and set to a sing along platform and childlike characters. This is a great start for very young children, but as an educator working with pre-teen as well as the middle school age children, I have learned that if a challenge is presented in a way that engages the student and

invokes critical thinking, the students will rise to the occasion.

I have observed in the last few decades that the visual arts, especially at the middle school age, is usually geared to an “arts and crafts” mentality. I have had fellow educators say that teaching art history is not really relevant and that adolescent students are not ready for this type of education. I, however, have experienced that when presented in the right format it can not only be informative but interesting and even fun. Students excel when given opportunities for critical thinking, but the teacher must have a “hook” to engage the student. This is exactly how animated entertainment works. The subject matter or the presentation of the characters in a cartoon or children’s program must “hook” the viewer. This can be done by encouraging critical thinking and by using a format that engages dialogue between parent and child. This is the idea behind using the Rollerbots, the Elite 7 and the Librarians of Historical Culture and Knowledge as the “hook” to an animated program that will infuse academics, morals, and values while entertaining and engaging the viewers.

Another aspect that will be included in the Rollerbot cartoon involves athletics. Athletics not only is a part of a well-rounded education, but it is often part of a well-rounded life in some way. As a former high caliber athlete in swimming and sprint kayaking, I can attest to the hours and hours of training and dedication needed to develop the skills of an elite athlete. In many cases there are many setbacks, illnesses,

injuries, lack of mental focus, fatigue, and constant repetitive workouts. Team sports add another factor in that the athletes must learn to work as a team to achieve the same common goal even if personalities, ways of life, and habits are different from each other. Athletes at an elite level do not give up easy. They have a “do not quit” mentality, and this is brought from the playing field of training to the business arena. A majority of high caliber athletes achieve successes in business by working hard to meet or even exceed their goals. There is a mental drive as well as a demand for excellence that they have incorporated into their work ethic. This is why the Elite 7 are connected to these groups of animated characters. Not only are they seven extraordinary athletes, but they are outstanding scholars, as well. The four professors were former high caliber athletes themselves but were drawn to the academic and coaching side of life. Sports is a great way for all three groups of characters to engage with each other and teach by example many values and principles to young viewers.

As I documented in my Visual Process, the development of my original characters, the Rollerbots, took several twists and turns starting with their creation in 1979. Over the years I have infused elements of my life experiences into them. They further developed while I attended USC to receive my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. It was at that time that I first created the human characters, the Elite 7. These characters stayed dormant throughout most of the next two decades until I began my studies toward my Masters of Fine Art degree. By that time I had

witnessed the degradation of animation that had occurred over the past thirty years. As I explored the literature, it became more and more evident that my characters could find a relevance within the animation industry to fill a void of children's programming that would promote academics and spiritual integrity. Throughout this study I was able to show how I updated my Rollerbots and Elite 7 characters so that they would not appear dated. I also wanted to make sure that I was inclusive within Biblical guidelines by showing diversity in my characters. I have included characters from different ethnicities, cultures, and countries. I have also made sure to include characters who have intellectual or physical disabilities.

The previous chapter showcases my deliverables as the Visual Solution of bringing back the integrity of animation. Although my strengths and the majority of my experience lie in studio arts, I have utilized a variety of mediums and media to achieve a well-rounded representation of how all three groups of my cartoon characters—the Rollerbots, the Elite 7, and the Librarians of Historical Culture and Knowledge—would work together to create an animated program that would appeal to Christian and non-Christians alike by infusing academics and traditional values into relevant storylines and adding elements of classic cartoons produced by Chuck Jones.

Each character has been developed with specific qualities so that they all work together to address the liberal arts, history and culture, athletics, as well as spiritual and ethical principles. My goal

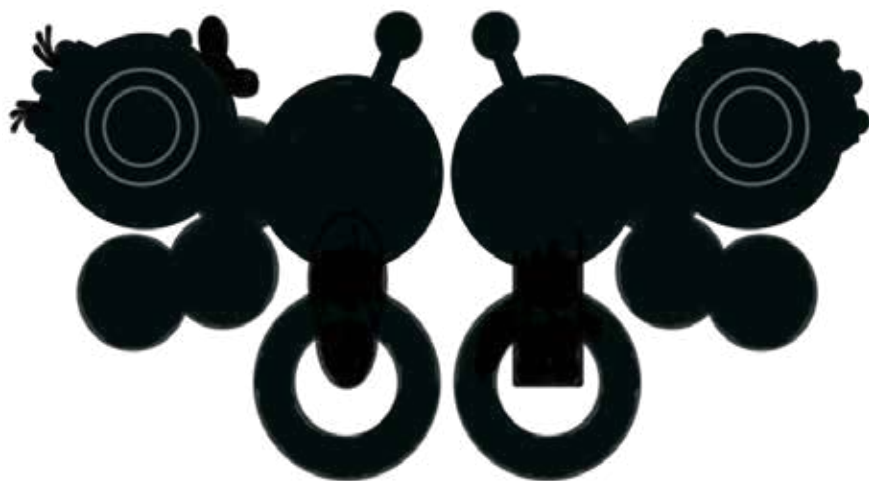
would be to have these characters produced in a television series. I have laid out the proposed pilot episode by including storyboards and a script. The other characters would be added as the series progressed.

The storylines would be based around everyday events. Unlike most other shows, the premise of my cartoon would not be good versus evil or the conflict between the protagonist and antagonist. Rather, the characters would encounter situations which the young viewers might encounter. Different characters will have something unique to add to the situation. The Rollerbots would be the surrogates for the young children who may be naïve or ignorant of specific things. The Elite 7 are adults that the young viewers can admire and from which they can learn how to better themselves academically, physically, mentally, and spiritually. The Librarians will add a lot of humor and antics while they teach and inform about our history and some ancient cultures.

Although this thesis was developed throughout my MFA journey at Liberty University, the conclusion of this study feels like the culmination of my life's work, in a sense, from the time that the Rollerbots were first created in 1979 until today. I can vividly picture all of my characters on a cartoon series, and I do hope that dream and that goal become a reality. Until that time, I will continue to develop these characters and others to fill the void in children's programming and hopefully return the integrity of animation through a liberal arts approach by improving the academic and spiritual influence on children.

Until that time, I will quote Looney Tunes character Porky Pig and say,

That's all, Folks!



Bibliography

- Bagdikian, B, "The Media Monopoly." Beacon Press, 1983. *journalism. nyu.edu*. New York University. Archived from the original on 16 October 2017.
- Bandura, A., Ross, D. and Ross, S.A. "Vicarious Reinforcement and Imitative Learning." *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 67, 1963, pp. 601-607. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0045550>
- Carabajal, Rosalie G. Personal Interview.
- "Charles Martin Jones." Encyclopaedia Britannica Online. Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 2019. Web. 02 Apr. 2019.
- Cho, Hoyun and Lawrence, Gary D. "Cartoons in Middle School Classrooms." *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School*, vol. 20, no. 5, 2015, pp. 304-307. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5951/mathteachmidscho.20.5.0304.
- "Chuck Jones: Extremes and In-Betweens - A Life in Animation." Directed by Margaret Selby, written by Greg Ford and Margaret Selby, *CAMI Spectrum*, 22 November 2000, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iU63YRaS7cQ>
- Coates, Brian, Pusser, H.E., & Goodman, Irene. "The Influence of 'Sesame Street' and 'Mister Rogers' Neighborhood' on Children's Social Behavior in the Preschool." *Child Development*, vol. 47, no. 1, March 1976, pp. 138-144. www.jstor.org/stable/1128292. Accessed 1 February 2019.
- Cooper, B. S., and Speakman, S.T.. "Pikachu Goes to School." *Teacher Magazine*, vol. 11, no. 7, Apr. 2000, p. 58-60. EBSCOhost, ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspxdirect=true&db=asn&AN=3147488&site=ehost-live&scope=site
- "Davey and Goliath." *Retroland*. Retrieved at <http://www.retroland.com/davey-and-goliath/>
- Engstrom, Erika. "Schoolhouse Rock: Cartoons as Education," *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, vol. 23, no. 3, 1995, pp. 98-104, DOI:10.1080/01956051.1995.9943695. Accessed 21 Sept. 2018.
- Giroux, Henry A. *Disturbing Pleasures: Learning Popular Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994
- Habib, K. and Soliman, T. "Cartoons' Effect in Changing Children Mental Response and Behavior." *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 3, 2015, pp. 248-264. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/jss.2015.39033>
- Hanesová, Dana, Pavel Hanes, and Daniela Masariková. "Developing Religious Thinking using C. S. Lewis's Chronicles of Narnia." *The Person and the Challenges : The Journal of Theology, Education, Canon Law, and Social Studies Inspired by Pope John Paul II*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2019, pp. 207-230.

- “History of Davey and Goliath.” Davey and Goliath, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2005, www.daveyandgoliath.org/timeline.html
- Kirsch, S.J. “Cartoon Violence and Aggression in Youth”. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 11, 2006, pp. 547-557. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2005.10.002>
- Liss, Marsha B., Reinhardt, Lauri C., and Fredriksen, Sandra. “TV heroes: The Impact of Rhetoric and Deeds.” *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, vol. 4, issue 2, April – June 1983, pp. 175-187. Accessed 1 February 2019.
- Nathanson, Amy I., and Joanne Cantor. “Reducing the Aggression- Promoting Effect of Violent Cartoons By Increasing Children’s Fictional.” *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, vol. 44, no. 1, Winter 2000, p. 125.EBSCOhost, ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asn&AN=3187051&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
- Nusair, D. (2018, February 26) “Timeline of Animated Film History: Evolution from Animated Drawing in 1906 to Present Day Digital Animation. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/timeline-of-animated-film-history-2420991>
- Savage, Rachel (2019, October 24). “Children’s animator battled for years for lesbian wedding.” Thomson Reuters Foundation, Accessed March 23, 2021 Retrieved from <https://news.trust.org/item/20191024181720-974z9>
- Simensky, L. “The Revival of the Studio-Era Cartoon in the 1990s.” *Funny Pictures: Animation and Comedy in Studio-Era Hollywood*, edited by Daniel Goldmark and Charlie Keil, 1st ed., University of California Press, 2011, pp. 272–292. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1pp6jj.18.
- Slavin, Robert E. *Educational Psychology: Theory and Practice*. Boston. 2012
- Sprafkin, J, and Gadow, Kenneth D. “The Immediate Impact of Aggressive Cartoons on Emotionally Disturbed and Learning Disabled Children.” *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, vol. 149, no. 1, Mar. 1988, p. 35.EBSCOhost, ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=asn&AN=5264413&site=ehost-live&scope=site.
- Strasburger, Victor & Wilson, Barbara. (2013). “Television violence: 60 years of research.” *Media Violence and Children: A Complete Guide for Parents and Professionals*. pp. 135-178.
- Swartz, A. (2018, April 23) “‘Steven Universe’ creator Rebecca Sugar talks making feminist art and favorite songs from the show.” Retrieved from <https://mic.com/articles/188998/steven-universe-creator-rebecca-sugar-talks-making-feminist-art-and-favorite-songs-from-the-show#.QaPCrFobL>
- Vischer, Phil “What Happened to Big Idea (Parts 1-11).” Blog *.Big Idea and Veggie Tales News*. WordPress, 15 November 2004.
- Wada-Marciano, Mitsuyo. “THE RISE OF ‘PERSONAL’ ANIMATION.” *Japanese Cinema in the Digital Age*, University of Hawai’i Press, 2012, pp. 74–96. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt6wqh7n.8
- Wallechinsky, David, and Loucky, Jamie. *The Book of Olympic Lists: A Treasure-Trove of 116 Years of Olympic Trivia*. Aurum Press. 2012

- Zafra, Cintia C. "Vicariousness and Forgiveness in the Chronicles of Narnia." *Studia Paedagogica Ignatiana*, vol. 20, no. 4, 2017, pp. 81-98..
- Zane, Z. (2018, July 17). Steven Universe Creator Rebecca Sugar Comes Out as "Non-Binary Woman." Retrieved from <https://www.out.com/popnography/2018/7/17/steven-universe-creator-rebecca-sugar-comes-out-non-binary-woman>

