

**School of the Arts of the Catholic University of Portugal
Master's Degree in Sound and Picture**



**Conflicting Relationships Between
Two Non-Antagonistic Animated Characters**

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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between two non-antagonistic characters in Animation, and the impact it can have in the unfolding of the narrative and the transformation of the two characters. Its purpose is also to invite scientists, artists, and the reader, to further consider this subject as part of the creative process of storytelling, similar to the case of an individual character.

This dissertation will explore historical-technological and scientific studies, as well as films and television series, which will serve as examples of conflict between two non-antagonistic characters. This research will allow the author to gather signs of what this particular kind of conflict and group of characters adds to movies and series—namely animated ones, in order to complement the focus of the course taken by the author.

At the end of this dissertation, a case study is made with the final project produced during this course, *A Helping Hoot*. This short film, which contains a narrative driven significantly by the conflict caused by the interactions between the two main characters, serves as a platform to apply the gathered information whenever relevant to the theme. The intended result is to help raise more awareness of the particular possibilities for storytelling brought by narratives driven by the conflict between two non-antagonistic characters.

Keywords: Story, Plot, Narrative, Character, Conflict, Tension, Disagreement, Relationship, Duo

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1. Introduction

1.1. The theme and the problematic

In the book *Film Characters / Die Figur im Film: Grundlagen der Figurenanalyse* (Eder, 2008), the author addresses the absence of studies on characters on several areas, one of them being the relationships between characters, or constellations of characters, as he calls them: “(...) Other important questions, however, were dealt with rather rarely, for instance, the constellations of characters or the relationship between particular characters and the themes and statements of their original texts” (p. 19).

The negligence on the study's theme is made further clear upon receiving no answer from a LinkedIn character-centered private group, called *Characters Engage (Animation Games Toys Licensing Children's Books Comic Greeting Card Toy Game)* (located at www.linkedin.com/groups/Characters-Engage-Animation-Games-Toys-3308260/about). With the help of the dissertation's advisor, who is a member in the group, a question was sent, concerning whether there was or not a noticeable evolution in the portrayal of relationships between non-antagonistic characters in animated movies and television series over time. The absence of any answer may be because of not enough knowledge from the members of the group, or perhaps they're not sensitive to the importance that constellations, rather than individual characters, can have in storytelling. This is an indication of the amount of research this theme still requires to this day.

The theme of this study is the relationship between two characters in animated features, short films, and television series. The choice for the animated ones over the live-action or literature ones is due to the core specialization of this Master's Degree being Animation.

This study focuses on the relationships between two characters with contrasting differences between each other. The two of them think and act differently from the other, and their differences in opinions, personalities, backgrounds, and ways of communicating or executing an existing task, can and will often result in some degree of conflict between the two. Usually, one will interfere with the other's goals (intentionally or otherwise), and they eventually will argue, and often misunderstand each other, either because of differences in language (a rare but existing case) or by one failing to see the other's point of view.

In most cases where the subject is **conflict** in a relationship between two characters, people often think about a relationship between hero and villain. However, the relationships between two characters that this study will look at are focused on two characters who are friends, partners, allies, or coworkers. As it will be explained soon, the conflict dealt with in this study is one less extreme and in a lighter tone than the conflict between hero and villain. While the conflict between those two is about wishing each other to lose or perish, the conflict between two characters who are both the good guys is about divergence in opinions, and ways of performing a task, of pursuing an objective, which they are trying to achieve together. Therefore, despite the traditional sense of conflict between characters, these two are not hero and villain; on the contrary, both are generally friendly to one another. The relationships this

study focuses on are therefore between two characters who may either be downright friends, or partners/allies, and who are basically, two distinct individuals who are part of the same team, meaning they share a common purpose within the story they both belong to. It's therefore a **non-antagonistic relationship**. The two characters may share the role of the hero in the story, or they may be one hero and his close partner. The basic reason why they don't become enemies or rivals (not excluding the possibility of them being actual rivals at the very start) is because they both also share the goal to restore the balance to the existing situation, a subject which will be later looked at in further detail.

Additionally, in this study, when the words "contrast" and "contrasting" are used (referring to the differences between two characters being discussed in a given example), their meaning is not in the extreme and traditional sense of the word, as if it is implying that the two characters are different in every conceivable aspect. For the present study, the word "contrast" simply refers to the ability of the differences between the two characters to cause some disagreements between them both while trying to pursue a goal together.

In several cases, as it will be shown through the course of this study, two characters that have this sort of relationship are the same gender. The theme of research is focused on both a) the relationship itself, with the similarities and differences between the two characters being looked at, and b) the ways that relationship plays a significant role in the unfolding of the general plot and in the evolution of the two characters throughout it.

In each plot, the two characters are on the same quest. In that quest, each one's way of acting and thinking (their characteristics, moods and traits) is gradually revealed, several times brought forth by clashing with the ones the other character possesses. The contrasting differences between the two characters lead to disagreements and other forms of conflict and tension between them. That tension makes the journey (the task they're trying to succeed at) more difficult, stressful and challenging to at least one of them. However, that tension caused between the two characters will cause them to evolve, as they will be influencing each other in some varying form. Along the way, both characters come to realize how important one is to the other. Perhaps A, who didn't like the presence of B, may discover he needs him just as much as B needs him, or A and B may learn to work together, thus becoming inseparable (and there are still many other possible outcomes). The two characters realize that, despite their differences, they complement each other.

Along the research for this study, it has been noticed that such relationships are common among a group of movies called the "buddy films".¹ These movies tell the story of two main characters of the same gender (mostly male), often with a lighthearted tone (Kuhn, & Westwell, 2012, p. 49), and, according to Sullivan, Schumer, & Alexander (2008), "focus on the strengths and contrasts of the characters to overcome adversity and become friends" (p. 19).

¹ The terms "buddy movie" or "buddy picture" are also accepted within the terminology.

This study's focus is the animated movies and series (with a few live-action examples as well, whenever relevant) which contain relationships between two characters similar to those described above, which can as well be found in the buddy movie genre. Naturally, whenever useful to the research, buddy movies themselves will be looked at as part of the study. *Toy Story* (Lasseter, 1995) is both animated and a buddy movie, which makes it one important example to be looked at in this study.

The reason for this choice in the type of relationships between characters is what they allow to show and tell to the audience in terms of storytelling, characterization, and humor. Seger (1990) explains that “characters rarely exist alone—they exist in relationships”, and “for many films and television series, the dynamic between the characters can be as important as any individual character quality” (p. 91). The fact of there being more than one character in the center of the story allows for a deeper understanding of the traits of each character. One gets a clearer understanding of a person's personality by observing both how he/she treats the people around him/her, and how he/she's treated back.

The story both characters are a part of, must contain by obligation some form of conflict, otherwise there's no reason for the creators of the story to be telling it in the first place. Without conflict, however its magnitude, the story has no real events. The existence of conflict of any kind, and the process of solving it as well as what the characters learn from the experience, is the fundamental reason stories are told (Wellins, 2005). For instance, here's the main example of conflict in any given story/narrative. Throughout this study, that example of conflict will often be referred to as the *Narrative Conflict*, in other words, *the main conflict of the present narrative* (and which will be later looked at in further detail). There are cases where the conflict created by the relationship between two contrasting characters trying to work together to reach a common goal, is in fact the narrative conflict, being the main focus of the plot and the main driving force that moves it forward. There are other cases, however, where this conflict between the two characters is not the narrative conflict, but can still nonetheless participate in it in a significant manner, for instance the interactions between the two contrasting characters being able to help it move forward in a certain direction, and in one or more occasions. This study aims to observe in what ways that relationship helps the plot advance, but also to observe some cases where such doesn't happen, looking at the reasons behind it.²

The main question this study is intending to answer is the following:

What's the role of the conflict between two non-antagonistic characters in the evolution of the narrative and the transformation of those characters?

This subject has been considerably neglected in the available books and studies that explore the foundations of storytelling. More attention was given to the hero himself, his conception, and his conflict with the villain throughout his quest. In contrast, other subjects became secondary, rarely dealt with, mentioned very briefly and often ignored. For example, the way

² This study often refers to the term “narrative” using alternative words, such as “story” or “plot”. All three words possess the same meaning within the pages of this study.

the hero behaves in reaction to another non-antagonistic character, or how the conflict between them created by their differences causes the hero (or both characters) to act in a way that makes the plot advance in a certain direction. Despite that, it is believed that a narrative driven by these interactions between two non-antagonistic characters is able to be as compelling as a story mainly focused on the hero and his conflict with the villain.

Nowadays, there already exists a vast amount of movies and television series that present situations within its plots in which two or more non-antagonistic characters who have contrasting differences try to work together to reach a common goal (the buddy movie genre being included in that list of films). There also exist several books and studies about what goes into the conceptualization and production of a movie or television series that is able to present both plots built in a manner that the audience can feel properly immersed into it, and three-dimensional characters to which the audience is able to relate or empathize with. Despite that, however, a subject that is often neglected, as there doesn't seem to be enough information about it available, is the situations between characters who are non-antagonistic, possess contrasting differences, and are trying to achieve a goal together, but because of their contrasts, often enter in arguments, which is actually a degree of conflict. This study is looking to help gather answers to this neglected matter, by providing a more in-depth analysis on this kind of situations between non-antagonistic characters. As that analysis is brought forth, more possibilities may be discovered for new scenarios revolving around these situations.

Filmmakers, screenwriters, animation/film enthusiasts, analysts and historians, they haven't quite yet put together a considerable amount of information that directly approaches this neglected subject, which is what this dissertation is intending to help contribute.

1.2. Methodology

The first step is to investigate bibliography on the matters of screenwriting, story development and character creation, history on animation and character constellations, and psychology concerning relationships and conflict in organizations, where teamwork is often required. From those, a deeper understanding on the matter will be acquired. The second step is to examine closely some examples in artistic works that feature relationships the likes of which this study is focusing on. After providing this analysis, it will be possible to visualize several varying scenarios in which this kind of relationship plays a very important role in narratives and in the transformation of the same characters.

Animated movies and television series will be looked at, describing what happens in each one, and seeing how the relationship and the story are handled (both simultaneous and individually). It will also be discussed what happens beneath the structure of a certain narrative and the conception of its characters (such as the archetypes and the different functions assigned to each character), and the buddy movie concept will be briefly analyzed. This study will show what can be done in a narrative driven by a conflicting relationship between two non-antagonistic and contrasting characters. Buddy movies are not the main

focus of this research, because a) not all movies and television series looked at in this study are considered part of that genre, and b) not all buddy movies possess a relationship between characters which causes events to happen within the plot. However, the genre serves as a guideline to observe the dynamic of the relationships between characters such as Chip and Dale, Shrek and Donkey, or Flora and Merryweather.

The final project of this course will be looked at as well, as a platform to apply the conclusions taken from the research.

1.3. The final project

The final project that has been produced in this Master's Degree, with the title of *A Helping Hoot*, is an animated short film with 05:37 minutes of running time. The story of this short takes place in the middle of a deep forest at night, where a man is lost and frustrated, and an owl tries to help him realize that the camp he's looking for is on the other side of a wall of trees near them. Because the owl is an animal, however, he's not able to conveniently give the man the information he needs. Gradually, as the man keeps ignoring the owl's message, both become angrier at each other, and the owl's patience is taken to the limit. The subtle ways he uses to try to communicate with the man gradually become more direct and invasive. The man keeps rejecting the owl, regarding him as someone trying to irritate him and not allowing him to figure out a way to be back at his camp. Ultimately, the owl takes off and flies in front of the man, blocking his way and attempting to make him change direction. The man now takes this as a sign of hostility and tries to defend himself with the flashlight, the nearest thing to his reach. As the relationship between both characters becomes more intense, so does the narrative conflict. The man is further away from reaching his destination, and the owl is further away from taking him there, so he takes more drastic moves. Eventually, in the middle of the misunderstandings and the war ensued between them, the owl steals the man's hat, causing him to chase him. They both cross the wall of trees, and while the man is still infuriated by the owl's theft, he stumbles on the camp he was trying to find. Both characters reach their goal. (At the beginning of the case study for this short film, a more detailed synopsis of its story will be provided, as a means to better understand the following information concerning it.)

Since the story focuses on both of the characters, and their many attempts to reach the unified goal of taking the man back to his camp, it's therefore a relationship that plays the main driving force that makes the plot advance until it reaches its resolution, which is the characters' own resolutions. The relationship between the man and the owl, as well as how it changes and evolves along the way, is the main focus of the short film—hence the main example of the theme of this research.

1.4. Structure

In the present chapter, the Introduction, the theme and the problematic are presented, in a loose manner, but later to be further discussed in the corresponding chapters and subchapters.

Chapter 2 contains three contexts: Historical-Technological, Theoretic, and Artistic.

The Historical-Technological Context takes a look at some motion pictures (literally, pictures that move), classic and modern, not all animated. The context pays special attention to a) how the use of the animation medium provided wider possibilities for storytelling, including in narratives driven by the kind of relationships explored in this study, b) some possible hints of evolution in the general conception of characters, and how, thanks to that, the relationships between them also became more complex, and c) how Animation became a form of entertainment firstly aimed at children, and thus came the need for characters to be more suitable role-models, a change that affected well-known characters and stories in media, such as Mickey Mouse and Tintin and Captain Haddock.

In the Theoretic Context, the information about character creation and different kinds/causes/resolutions of conflict is organized by sub-chapters focusing on the subjects mentioned in the Methodology. Each sub-chapter is supported by the information provided by the studied theoretic authors. Some characters in existing artistic works are mentioned as well, in order to provide a more informative and elaborated illustration of each subject. The dissertation studies a) the kinds of conflict existent within a relationship between two contrasting characters working together, b) the causes for said conflicts to occur, c) the reasons for these two characters to remain united (instead of becoming enemies), d) the ways of solving the conflict they may be facing, and e) the consequences brought by the conflict (and its solving) within the plot and the gradual evolution of the two, or at least one of the characters.

In the Artistic Context, there's a list of the studied works that present the clearest examples of narratives driven by the conflicting relationships between the two main characters. Several observations made in each of them are based on the theory provided by the theoretic authors previously looked at, although some of them come from the examination of the artistic work itself, such as in terms of the structure of the plot and what sort of conflicts it brings to the characters.

In Chapter 3, a case study is made with the final project of this Master's Degree, the short film *A Helping Hoot*. In the case study, the project is examined in light of what is mentioned and discussed in Chapter 2, and through it, conclusions are attained, regarding the theme of research.

In Chapter 4, the conclusion of this study, the problematic and questions made are brought back and answered. An acknowledgement is also made, about the importance of relationships between two non-antagonistic characters in a narrative, and reminds of the need for more studies and analysis to be made about that particular subject. It continues on, explaining the hypothetical advantages provided by such studies: how they could guide future filmmakers, animators, and writers; helping them find new creative and unique ways to build a story focused on, and mainly driven by, two characters. If they wish so, more than two, similar to *All Dogs Go To Heaven* (Bluth, 1989).

2. Historical-Technological, Theoretic, and Artistic Research

2.1. Fundamental Concepts

Before properly beginning this study, it's important to start by answering three questions: What is a character, what is a relationship, and what is a conflict.

A character, according to Jannidis (2013), is a “text- or media-based figure in a storyworld, usually human or human-like” (p. 1). As it will be looked at throughout this study, a character is a fictional sentient being that inhabits a given storyworld—the world in which the story is taking place. Every character in the story has a mission, regardless of how small or brief it may be. That mission is something that drives him or her into fulfilling their function while they're on-screen. Therefore, each character is a participant within the storyworld, from the very moment he or she first appears, to their very last frame.

The characters with the simplest missions are the ones that appear briefly in the background, apart from the main action of a given scene. They may say something, a few lines, or remain silent all throughout their appearance. Their purpose is basic, which is to make the storyworld appear believable. If a scene is taking place somewhere in a rural medium or a small town, there doesn't need to be that many characters in the background. If, however, a scene is taking place in a metropolis, inhabited by millions of people, such a fact should be properly displayed by the amount of people (or characters) in the background.

The characters with the most complex missions are the ones that give the viewer the biggest emotional response, which are in most cases the hero and the villain. They appear on-screen a considerable amount of time, superior to the time spent by the other characters, and are the ones who allow the main plot of the story—the narrative conflict—to keep going, to evolve. The hero and the villain pose two opposing forces, since each is trying to achieve something that will mean a victory for them, but a defeat for the other.

Sometimes, two opposing forces, as it's been previously stated in this study, don't necessarily mean a hero and a villain, but two heroes who have different ways of thinking and acting while pursuing a common goal, and must learn to tolerate each other, and work together to achieve it. Therefore, it's important to touch the other subject: a relationship.

A relationship, within the intents and purposes of this study, is understood as a close association between two characters who react to, and deal with each other. They spend considerable time together and influence each other in some conceivable way. It should be made clear by the creating crew that this relationship takes place in the past and future moments the characters spend off-screen, by showing the audience that the constellation of characters exists for a certain time period within the storyworld, has existed for some time (unless it's being started within the present story), and it's likely to keep existing for as long as the crew intends, depending on the story. A relationship between two characters that is possible to see as a solid example for this study is one where both characters have contrasting differences between each other, which will likely cause some tension between them

throughout their journey, and such tension will influence the story in a considerable way. There can also be examples in which the two characters are not extremely contrasting with each other, and can several times agree on things. However, there must be moments in the narrative where at least one of them, even if with a degree of aggressiveness, tries to convince the other to do something he thinks is better, but the other is hard to convince. The way that argument finishes (there may be interruptions, but those don't count as finishing it, since neither character has changed his opinion on the present matter) will take the plot in a direction that will bring consequences for the characters, which may either help them succeed in their journey, or make it harder to overcome. Among the consequences are also internal ones—learning and personal growth.

A conflict is the confrontation of at least two opposing forces, a source of unbalance in the main character's life. It involves an obstacle, something that makes the character's present goals harder to reach, turning it into a challenge. Whichever the conflict, it may cause him to feel insecure, frustrated, angry, sad or fearful, and will force him to take action, to try to do something to fix or overcome it, either for him or for those he cares about. If there is no conflict, then nothing important is happening in the story. There's nothing pushing the characters and showing them they need to change something in order to turn a wrong, unbalanced situation into a right one.

Rahim (2011) provides some clearance for the meaning (or meanings) of conflict itself. The author starts by saying that conflict "is a natural outcome of human interaction that begins when two or more social entities (i.e., individuals, groups, organizations, and nations) come in contact with one another in attaining their objectives. Relationships among such entities may become incompatible or inconsistent when two or more of them desire a similar resource that is in short supply; when they have partially exclusive behavioral preferences regarding their joint action; or when they have different attitudes, values, beliefs, and skills" (p. 1). To put it in basic terms, when two or more parties (or, in this case, characters), who are together trying to reach a common objective, have different goals and ways of thinking or acting, there will eventually be tension between them, hence a conflict.

There can be many degrees of conflict, and several of them within the same narrative, able to last from just a few seconds to several minutes of the entire duration of the plot. For example, a character may enter the kitchen, and not being instantly able to choose whether to drink milk or juice—a brief moment of indecision. Or, in a more serious conflict, the character in question knows of something wrong a friend's boyfriend did, and needs to decide whether to tell his friend, or to let her keep having the relationship she has with the boyfriend in order to spare her feelings. Either if these conflicts may be the narrative conflict, as long as they're the ones that occupy most of the time in the plot and the one that has a stronger influence on the characters' actions. Otherwise, they might be part of a longer and more complex story, and therefore general situations the characters face in their lives. They could perhaps appear in the beginning of a certain narrative as a way for the storyteller to show how the main character's life and his world are like before the actual adventure begins. For instance, shortly after the character, in this case the main one, finally makes up his mind on what to drink, he receives

the news that his planet is being invaded by aliens. Whether his mission is to stop the aliens or to keep himself and his relatives and friends safe and sound, that conflict is the one of higher importance in the narrative, and the one that will take longer to be resolved—the narrative conflict.

Now focusing on the relationship aspect of this study's theme, the conflicts talked about above can be equally applied to situations between more than one character. The character who can't make up his mind about whether to drink the milk or the juice, may have a friend nearby, who will be either a) making fun of his indecision, or b) trying to help him decide, or c) experiencing the same kind of dilemma. In the situation where the character needs to figure out if he'll tell his friend about the wrong thing her boyfriend did, he may decide to go first ask another of his friends for advice. In the situation where the planet is being invaded by aliens, the main character may have a best friend, who will often share scenes with him, maybe both sharing the role of the hero. In all these situations between two characters, eventually they'll disagree on something, which will create a conflict between them, and that conflict, by making the character's task harder to complete, may also help move the plot along.

As it has been previously explained, the two characters this study observes, despite of some degree of conflict between them, are not hero and villain. Neither of them wishes the other's harm. They are usually friendly to one another, and often are working together. It's a non-antagonistic relationship, albeit one that is not without occasional moments of tension and divergence in opinions. The pairs of characters (or duos) this study observes are, in general, ordinary people, dealing with ordinary life situations. Some of these characters have a unified objective, but each may approach the problem in a different way, which will leave the other character, or even both, confused or frustrated. One of them may prefer to be left alone, and the other will insist on staying. Both may have distinct goals, but the ways to reach either one are revealed very early in the story to be the same. Such a situation will cause them to stick together, and occasionally help one another. Although, because of their general differences in personality and opinion, one of them, or both, will either a) want to be alone, for thinking they can reach their own goal quicker that way; or b) since they know how much they need the other's help, will accept the company, but won't be able to for long. Eventually they'll return to the arguments, and sometimes resort to petty revenge, like playing tricks on each other. In some cases, both characters have a problem with the other's opinion or way of executing a task, and in other cases, only one of the characters minds about the other's differences. In some cases, the two characters care deeply about each other, but still need to learn how to be together, how to listen to one another, how to work together. Sometimes, only one of the characters displays difficulty in being with, or listening to, or working with, the other character. And in that case, this first character is the one who needs to learn the lesson. What matters here is that, ideally, if the story is about the two characters and their contrasting differences, the purpose of the story is to see them learning something valuable from each other.

2.2. Historical-Technological Context

2.2.1. Animation versus live-action

“The driving force that helped develop film and animation was an ongoing attempt to develop more compelling stories and visuals” (Wellins, 2005, p. 4). Such attempt, as revealed by cave paintings, has been indeed going on since very early in the history of man. The desire to bring life to pictures in order to tell stories was present even at that point in time.

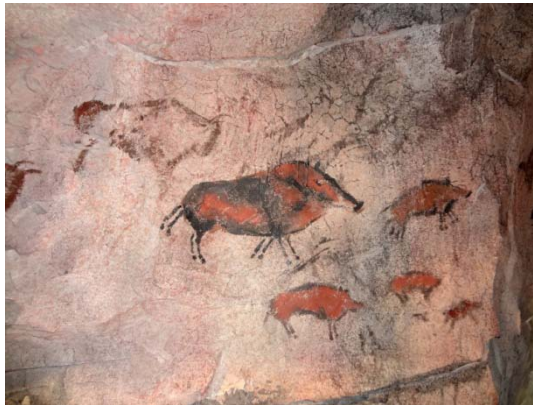


Fig. 2.1. Cave painting displaying movement

The paintings found in caves such as Lascaux, Chauvet and La Baume Latrone, tell hunting stories experienced by the people inhabiting them. In those paintings, the boars, mammoths, bison and other wild animals, were drawn with eight legs—an indication of them walking or running—more than one tail or head, and some even displayed their entire bodies multiplied. These cave paintings were done this way most likely to allow the hunters to tell their stories to others at any given moment and in a specific manner, to convey the message how they intended: for instance, whether the animals were moving or not, how fast they were moving, and maybe even *when* they were moving. The story became more compelling because of these aspects, due to the audience being able to almost experience the related events as if they were present when it occurred.

This is true both for animation and live-action. However, animation gives the storyteller more possibilities for fictional ideas, allowing him for example to show animal characters with personalities and intelligence similar to the ones humans have. It probably would be possible to train real animals to perform most of the actions intended for the story, but not all of them—such as crossing the arms or repeatedly beating the foot on the floor to express impatience, frustration or anger, which is a typically human behavior—and neither the facial expressions. The way two animal or non-human characters interact with each other can provide the audience with interesting storylines that make it easier for audience members of any age (especially the younger ones) to understand and thus take something that gives him/her an idea about relationships in general. This statement is not saying that non-human characters are more suitable for children’s stories. Animation is universal. People of all ages are able to watch and enjoy it, as long as the story and its message are presented properly and clearly. The audience is able to be engaged in the story and take the characters and facts as

seriously as they're intended to be taken. They willingly forget that it's a fictional narrative and fully accept the behaviors portrayed by the characters in the piece, even if they are animals behaving like humans.

Mickey Mouse, created by Walt Disney and Ub Iwerks in the 1920s, was one of the first cartoon characters with a brain, the ability to think. As Hooks explains, this brain gave Mickey an illusion of (human) life. By being able to think, he could form opinions and develop values, which were expressed as emotions, which humans empathize with.³ That was one of the reasons viewers could form a connection with the character. In the 1930s, scenes started being visually planned before being animated, through the use of sequential drawings called storyboards, invented by the Disney Company. They allowed a character's thought process to be defined early in the storytelling process, making it possible to be shown in the final piece in a way just as clear and distinct.⁴

John Lasseter, after watching the film *Tron* (Lisberger, 1982), which featured live actors interacting with computer-generated three-dimensional worlds and objects, felt inspired to create cartoons with animated characters doing a similar thing. He had been let go from Disney before he could have completed his first directing project, and which would feature such techniques. Lucasfilm, at the moment, was starting a computer graphics division, and hired Lasseter to teach them character animation. Their first work was *The Adventures of André & Wally B.* (Smith & Lasseter, 1984), the first animated short film to feature three-dimensional characters, and with the ability to squash and stretch. That animation technique, frequently seen in traditional animation, only became possible to do in computers after Lasseter encouraged the computer scientists at Lucasfilm to develop the required technology. As Lasseter could conclude, as he states in *The Pixar Story* (Iwerks, 2007), "The art challenges technology, and technology inspires the art."



Fig. 2.2. *The Adventures of André & Wally B.*, the first short film with 3D characters able to squash and stretch

While it's true that over time the animation techniques have been evolving, that doesn't mean the characters also became more expressive as well. The ability to make a character expressive and believable comes from the sole talent and experience of the assigned animator. However, animation presents the possibility to give drawings the ability to express the same

³ <http://www.awn.com/blog/illusion-life-new-normal> (Retrieved November 6, 2014)

⁴ <http://www.edhooks.com/animators1-copy-11-copy-copy.html> (Retrieved November 6, 2014)

emotions as the ones human beings possess, which also makes possible for relationships between two animated characters to be illustrated as exaggerated and expressively as the animator desires, which helps to convey the ideas of a given scene more clearly, whether it's a sad situation, or one meant to make the audience laugh (mostly from the situation rather than simply the exaggerated movements or comical facial expressions). Additionally, in animation, the eyes are often larger than in reality. Since the eyes play an important part in showing the emotions in a person's face, when they are enlarged in animated movies, it's possible for the characters to show their emotions to the audience more clearly. It's important in both animation and live-action, even though the former has a few advantages on that regard (as explained above), that the characters are believable in any given scene, which ever their current emotions, so that it's easier for the audience to relate and empathize with them—feel what the characters are feeling (Thomas & Johnston, 1981, p. 13).

Animated characters are able to display emotions and execute movements, as expressive and exaggerated as the animator believes it's required to convey a certain attitude or mood. When it comes to relationships between characters, being able to clearly show the facial expressions and body language of a character as reactions to something the other character said or did, is a valuable accomplishment in order to communicate the message in the story. According to Walt Disney, "animation can explain whatever the mind of man can conceive" (Thomas & Johnston, 1981, p. 13). Additionally, based on the way a character reacts to another, it's possible for the audience to understand more about said character's personality, since more can be revealed about a character while facing difficult situations than while in their comfort zone. Characters who behave or think differently from each other, especially when both characters need to collaborate, is one way to put at least one of them out of their comfort zone, which in turn helps the audience know more about said character, and be more interested in both him and the story, and how both will evolve as the story progresses.

From the technological point of view, it's possible to draw some conclusions related to the relationships between characters, mostly based on what animation adds to the storytelling in a given narrative.

2.2.2. The evolution of characters and their relationships

The historical research, at least in the general sense, shows that there have been two major gradual changes in characters and stories, in television and movies, either animated or live-action: a) the sense of target-audiences becoming more thoroughly established, separating clearly what is meant to be watched by adults from what is meant for children, and b) the plots and characters (as well as their relationships) becoming more complex, whichever the age of the target-audience. Below, the evolution both of characters and Animation, as a form of entertainment, will be looked at in further detail.

People around the world have already watched millions of films and television series, animated or live-action, not counting the other mediums where it's possible to find some form of narrative, such as books. People have witnessed, in the many forms of media, all kinds of

stories, all kinds of characters that live in those stories, and the many ways they relate to each other. As more years and significant events happen, people’s views and opinions keep changing, which creates the need for the stories that are told to change along with them. For instance, there’s a growing sense of morality, for audiences ranging from children to teens or young adults, with characters more often trying to do something because they feel it’s “the right thing” (not just because it’s associated with their goal, although sometimes it isn’t, depending on the story), or being scolded when making a wrong choice. Together with that, there’s also the growing common attempt to bring stronger storytelling to various films and television series for those kinds of audiences, which weren’t always so concerned with that aspect. As time went on, stories in which the characters deal with internal and complicated issues became more frequent, and because said stories, as it is expected, had seemingly complex characters, those also became more frequent, a tendency that began to spread. This is verifiable in television series, which tell several stories with the same characters, albeit divided into episodes. While some of those stories deal with lighthearted issues, some others deal with deeper emotions, such as fears or lack of self-confidence. Therefore, the characters need to be built in such a way that allows them to display all the necessary emotions, in a believable and relatable way, in order to properly help tell the episode’s story. As the characters became more complex, their relationships became more complex as well.

The best way to understand the evolution of characters in film and animation, as well as their relationships with each other, is to look at the versions of some of the same characters and franchises from one point in time to the modern days. The changes found concerning those characters/franchises reveal the shifting tendencies and needs mentioned above: better role-models, or more relatable characters and complex stories and relationships, to suit the needs of an ever-evolving audience.

2.2.2.1. Batman and the character complexity



Fig. 2.3. Batman, as seen in both the 60s television series (left), and in the 2005 movie (right)

The general feeling one has when looking at modern movies and series, animated or live-action, is that the characters have complex relationships with each other, ones which the audience can identify with their own. From those movies or series, in the ones that are

particularly aimed at children, the characters and their relationships with each other, in a non-antagonistic way, present a somewhat ideal behavior for the young viewers to assume, in their behaviors towards others. Some years ago, this was not the case. In some adult live-action examples, the character of Batman, for instance, went through a massive change from the one portrayed in the television series *Batman* from the 60s, to the one portrayed in the Christopher Nolan's trilogy, started with the movie *Batman Begins* (Nolan, 2005). While the 60s' television series was lighthearted, bright and colorful, and with such comedic elements as camp one-liners and slapstick, Nolan presented to the movie audience an origin story which, together with its following sequels, displays considerably deeper and more complex matters, both related to the characters and to their relationships. The movie follows the character of Bruce Wayne as he begins his troublesome journey to become a vigilante in the city of Gotham, where he grew up in. The assassination of his parents and his fear of bats gradually triggers in him a will to become a protector of said city, by stopping crime and taking its power away. Additionally, because he had been taught that in order to conquer fear, he needs to himself become fear, he chooses to adopt the bat as his symbol (an example of how the movie deals with deep matters). The audience witnesses the steps that gradually lead the main character, after the severe hardships in his life up until that point, into ascending to his superhero identity. Christopher Nolan's take on Batman was one of the first modern reboots of superhero franchises, presenting their origin stories, and filled with real human emotions and motivations, and believable and relatable (to some extent) drama and conflict in the main character's life. Another good example that does this is *Iron Man* (Favreau, 2008).

In fairness, Tim Burton's movies of the same superhero, in the late 80s and early 90s, and starring Michael Keaton as Batman, also took on a dark tone. However, it was dark only to some degree, more so in the visual sense and in the "scary" sense, than in the deep emotions sense.

2.2.2.2. Mickey Mouse and Animation: from a general source of entertainment to a more family-centered one



Fig. 2.4. Mickey's evolution over the years

According to Vogler (1998), "Mickey Mouse started as an ideal animal Trickster, although he has matured into a sober master of ceremonies and corporate spokesman" (p. 79). Mickey, in his first shorts, was mischievous and violent, a drinker and a smoker, and treated the nearby animals as musical instruments and tools according to his needs. Besides this slightly cruel

behavior displayed by the character of Mickey, he also possessed a more adult-like build, with a smaller forehead, thinner body and longer muzzle.

The reason for this display of negative behaviors was mainly due to these cartoons not being aimed at any particular demographic. Animation, around the 20s and 30s, was a novelty, and people of all age groups were interested in witnessing this spectacle of moving pictures with charismatic characters. Animation was a form of entertainment for the masses, and it was only later on that it was given the role of entertainment mainly aimed at children and families.

As the years passed, and Disney's cartoons were being greatly watched by children, some concern began to rise, that Mickey Mouse could be a bad influence for younger viewers. Not only that, but as Disney became more popular around the world, with Mickey as the main mascot and symbol of what the company (and consequently America) stood for, the character started being gradually toned down, making him nicer and more innocent, even with a younger and "cuter" look, in order for Disney to make sure that the message they were sending to the world was that they were a family-friendly company and entity.

Most of Mickey Mouse's mischief passed over to Donald Duck, and over the years, the drinking and smoking have been gradually reduced until almost non-existent. None of the Disney characters are seen drinking or smoking nowadays (except perhaps for the occasional antagonist), and the overall violence is watered down, turned into light slapstick, a considerably small amount of it ever coming from Mickey himself, who had slowly been pulled into the role of the straight man.

These examples, although not indications of evolution in relationships between characters in the general and wider sense of storytelling over the years, are nonetheless an indication of the mentality existent at the time, concerning the degree of character and story complexity expected from that sort of cartoons. At the time, people didn't expect as much detail as today in the storytelling presented in an animated piece. Animation was something new and exciting, and the focus was mostly in showing fictional characters moving and interacting with fictional worlds and other characters, the stories serving as a vehicle to give the characters something to act and react to.

2.2.2.3. My Little Pony and relationships



Fig. 2.5. The 80s television series (left) and the current one (right)

The My Little Pony franchise, a girl's toy line owned by Hasbro, has had four animated television series so far, and in this study, the two extremes are looked at: the first animated series, simply titled *My Little Pony*, created in the 1980s, and the current one, titled *My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic*. Each series has different worlds and different characters. While some characters' names appear in more than one, as far as identities are concerned, no character from one of the versions has passed to another—each and every animated series of the franchise has utter and completely different casts.

In *My Little Pony*, the main characters have very few distinct personalities. In the episode *Rescue at Midnight Castle* (Gibbs, 1984), the heroes, a group of four ponies and a human girl, venture through the forest, looking for a way to defeat the villain. As they go through their mission, it's possible to notice that most of the characters talk and behave the same way. When one character points out something to another, it's possible for the writer to assign that line to any other character without making a difference who said it. For instance, around the middle of the plot, a friend they're visiting is looking for an object they'll need to use in order to defeat the villain. At a certain moment, when he momentarily mistakes his pet rabbit for said object, one of the hero characters calls to his attention by pointing out his mistake, but in a bland way. That simple action could have been executed by nearly either of the character's friends, and the performance and tone would have been very similar, if not exactly alike.

My Little Pony possessed a cast composed of mostly one-dimensional characters, with only a very small amount of them standing out and feeling unique to the audience. The second animated series featured a more varied cast, while the third one followed a somewhat similar path to the first one. It's the fourth animated series however, that marks the most significant change from all the previous three.

My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic, which premiered in 2010, was developed by the writer and animator Lauren Faust. Faust had previously worked on other animated television series, such as *The Powerpuff Girls* and *Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends*, created by her husband, Craig McCracken. Both shows were well-received and considerably popular among both children and older people of both genders, a feat made possible by the clever jokes (often not understood by the younger viewers), the engaging storylines, and the three-dimensional

characters. Lauren Faust was approached by Hasbro Studios when they were intending to create a new animated series for the My Little Pony franchise. Faust had grown watching cartoons, one of them being the one in question, but found the characters to be uninteresting and with bland personalities. At the age of eight, Faust used to play with the My Little Pony toys, all the while assigning distinct personalities to each character. With the opportunity that was given to her by Hasbro Studios, Faust intended to create a My Little Pony television series that would present, similar to *The Powerpuff Girls* and *Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends* before it, imaginative and compelling plots, sophisticated humor (in order for parents to be willing to watch it with their children, and being entertained as well), and interesting and relatable characters, who would be inspiring role-models for little girls. Faust didn't treat the young viewers as if they had lack of intelligence, on the contrary she treated them as she wished she had been so when she was their age (SonyAnimation, 2014, time-code 5:27). As a result, the characters are complex, and the problems (either internal or external) they deal with in their every-day lives, feel realistic, which helps the viewers identify themselves with them. The complexity of these characters, accompanied with the manner they're animated and their facial expressions are constructed, allows them to, not just display signs of affection towards each other, but also to display feelings of anger, sadness, and inner concern. This fact helps this animated series contrast with the first one, where the characters acted on a more superficial manner, and rarely started arguing with each other, which, in reality, is usually bound to happen frequently, especially in situations where two or more characters are together on the same mission, but each has a different way of thinking and doing things.

All the characters in this fourth animated series have distinct personalities, and neither one does or says something the same way the other does. Therefore, all characters have their own way of doing things and pursuing their goals, a fact that often leads to some degree of conflict between at least two of them. As it will be seen in the Theoretic Context, some of the episodes deal with exactly that issue, showing two of the main characters experiencing significant moments of tension between them, because of how different they are, and the way each addresses a certain task.

"Friendship" is the central theme of this fourth animated television series of the My Little Pony franchise, and as it is expected, each episode ends with the characters learning something about said theme. With such a premise in mind, Faust and the creating crew considered important for their stories to display real-life scenarios, so that the moral at the end could be clear and relatable, and of course, explained in a simple way for the young viewers to be able to understand it, as well as apply it in their own lives.

While the friendship theme did appear in the previous animated series as well, it wasn't as central and frequently dealt with in their episodes as it was in *My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic*. In the three previous series, the fact that the main characters were friends with each other didn't add much to the stories, and several problems they dealt with were unconnected to the friendship between them, or between them and someone from outside. Therefore, it's fair to say that the franchise has evolved in that regard, by having more focused storylines,

accompanied by a more solid storytelling, and a cast of three-dimensional and distinct characters.

2.2.2.4. Tintin and Captain Haddock and the evolution of characters, relationships, and messages



Fig. 2.6. Tintin (right) and Captain Haddock (left), as seen in both the books and the movie adaptation

The ways Tintin tries to help Captain Haddock moderate his drinking habit, and the ways said habit causes Haddock to make their journey more difficult; both were handled differently in the classic book and in the modern movie adaptation: *The Crab with the Golden Claws* (Hergé, 1941), and *The Adventures of Tintin: The Secret of the Unicorn* (Spielberg, 2011), respectively.

The modern movie is actually based on three of Hergé's books, which were fused into one single story. The reason why the other two books are not being included in this study, is because the one book that is in fact included contains the portions of the film where Tintin and Captain Haddock's relationship begins, and therefore, where it's possible to observe in greater detail the contrasts between both characters.

There is in fact an animated television series. Despite this study's awareness of the series, it will not look into it, since the books are translated to the screen in a rather faithful way, with a small amount of minor changes in the events, which merely exist in order to split each story into two episodes without crossing over the duration of around twenty minutes. Because of such, this study is looking at the two extremes of the subject: the original books and the film adaptation. The animated series is somewhat a mid-term that gravitates more towards the extreme side of the books than to the one of the film. Also, the film adaptation contains more drastic changes, since it fuses three of the books, one of them unrelated to the Unicorn story, and removes story elements in order to make room for others that better suit the newly-formed plot. In the movie, Tintin meets Captain Haddock shortly after learning about the Unicorn (the captain's ancestor's ship), and the secret it contains, and which can only be figured out by the captain. These circumstances differ significantly from the books.

The dislike Tintin displays over Haddock's drinking habit, and his subsequent mistrust, are more pronounced in this modern film adaptation of the classic story. There are two possible

reasons: a) audiences nowadays are more sensitive to what young viewers are exposed to in television, movies, books, and other entertainment mediums, which contrasts with what was accepted over half a century ago, as it is verified in Mickey Mouse's case, and b) movies, old and new, especially the family-oriented ones, carry the job of teaching lessons to the viewers, with particular concern towards the younger ones.

In the book, when Tintin first meets Haddock, he finds him drunk. As they both begin to talk, Tintin openly advises him to let go of the habit. In the movie, apart from calling the captain's ship a "drunken tub" as he tries to escape from it, Tintin is not as verbal, but his behavior and voice tone shows to the audience how much he disapproves of Haddock's habit. There's a moment where Tintin is very close to the captain's face, and accidentally smells his breath at the moment he breathes out. His reaction is a quick cough and an attempt to keep his face from shifting, followed by him almost fainting when the captain resumes his walk. This quiet yet expressive display of disapproval of someone's bad habit is probably a sign of Tintin's age (between teenager and young adult), together with how the storytellers found socially appropriate for someone that age, and in a movie made for today's audience, to behave: not being openly verbal about certain dislikes in someone else next to him. (Tintin calling names to Haddock's ship, however, is probably a way for Tintin to try to express his disapproval without saying it directly to the captain's face. The line may also have been caused by Tintin's anger over having been locked in the ship's cellar by the villain's henchmen moments before meeting the captain, which is exactly the case in the book. However, in that case, his lines are different, and he's not referring to the captain's habit, but to the fact he had found opium while locked in the cellar, which is part of the plot in the book, and given a new form and use in the movie.)

It is closer to the end of the movie that Tintin adopts a more verbal and aggressive attitude about Haddock's habit. In the beginning of that segment, he trusts the captain, albeit reluctantly, with an important piece of paper that the villain must not attain. Haddock is more than willing to honor his commitment, so much so in fact, that he manages to keep himself from drinking anything while guarding the piece of paper; fighting to not feed his bad habit and thus getting distracted. When two of the villain's henchmen find him, they manage to overpower him by breaking a bottle of wine on his head, which instantly renders him unconscious. When Tintin comes back and realizes what has happened, the captain tries to explain his own side of the story. But when he mentions the bottle of wine, and Tintin catches the odor of alcohol, he assumes the captain had let his bad habit get the best of him once again, and ends the conversation by saying "I can smell it in you". In the book, Tintin's disapproval doesn't reach this level, even though it does so in the movie. Its purpose in the story, however, is perhaps to help the character of Haddock to gain a better control over his habit, thanks to a motivation believable and relatable enough for the audience. If he had more control over his habit sooner, Tintin wouldn't be so quick to jump to wrong conclusions at this point in the story. Despite Tintin being right or wrong, Haddock needs to regain his trust. That fact is a clear example of how their relationship (as well as the conflict between them) is more complex in the movie. The captain's drinking habit becomes a reason for lack of trust in

him, rather than the more humorous and lighthearted role it had in the books. In them, particularly in his and Tintin's first adventure together, Haddock being drunk would be an advantage for them. Anytime one of the bad guys got between him and his bottle (either by taking it from him or breaking it by accident), he would become furious and attack them.

2.3. Theoretic Context

This study deals with the conflict between two non-antagonistic characters who are trying to work together, with differences in personality and/or opinion, but it also deals with the way said conflict affects both the characters and the story they're in, because ultimately, after overcoming the challenges brought by both the main conflict in the narrative, and by one of the characters to the other, one of the characters or the two of them will have learned something with the experience and will have become better and stronger people.

In this chapter, the following aspects will be looked at: a) the different kinds of conflict in a narrative, particularly the kinds present within non-antagonistic relationships, b) the different causes for such conflicts to occur, c) the reasons for two contrasting characters to form an alliance, d) in what ways these conflicts can be solved, e) what are the consequences followed by both the conflict and its solving, and what they bring to the narrative and the characters' lives, helping both to evolve, and f) the archetypes and functions of characters who form such conflicting relationships. The reason for this last point to be included is because understanding the archetypes of the two characters, helps to understand their role in the present narrative, how they affect it, and why these characters affect each other the way they do.

2.3.1. Different kinds of conflict

Ed Hooks (2011), acclaimed acting teacher for stage actors and animators, explains the difference between theatrical reality and regular reality, as well as the types of conflict. He explains that regular reality is every single thing a person does, or happens to him or her in their daily life. Everything is shown: going to the store, cleaning the house, etc. In contrast, theatrical reality has a form and is condensed in time and space. It only contains the parts that help to tell a particular story. That's the reality one sees in a movie, a play, or a book. Another important difference between both realities, as Hooks further explains, is that theatrical reality requires conflict, some form of obstacle the character faces. "People that are shopping at the grocery store are participating in regular reality. Let a tiger or a monkey loose in the dairy department, and you get theatrical reality." He goes on, saying that "there are only three possible kinds of obstacles or conflict; there is conflict with yourself, conflict with your situation and conflict with another person. Your character (...) can have more than one kind of conflict, but he must have at least one" (pp. 18–19).

It's necessary to exist conflict in order for the reality to be considered theatrical. That conflict, as explained above, may come from the relationship between two characters, one of them representing an obstacle for the other while he tries to reach his objective. Marlin, in *Finding*

Nemo (Stanton, 2003), is looking for his son (conflict with the situation) and the only fish helping him, Dory, suffers from short-term memory loss (conflict with another character, due to the obstacle she represents). Even though she's trying to help him, it's easy for her to forget what she's doing one minute to the other.

Any of these kinds of conflict has the ability to be the most important one in a given story. The name that has been given to said conflict is the *Narrative Conflict*, which is the primary source of unbalance in the world in which the narrative takes place. That unbalance is what has the strongest influence on the emotions and actions of the main characters. It's therefore the one conflict that occupies most of the time in the plot, and the one that, once it's solved, allows the story to end, and the characters to return to their regular lives, although somewhat changed, having evolved after overcoming the conflict.

When two characters are trying to achieve a mutual goal together, being two instead of one makes it very likely that there will be differences in opinions and ways of performing a certain task. One of the characters may be one who works better during the day, while the other prefers to work at night. One may be more relaxed, while the other gets easily nervous, even more after seeing his partner so calm. One may have a way of achieving a goal, while the other may think that way takes longer or is less efficient. From these differences results the conflict: "the process resulting from the tension between team members because of real or perceived differences (De Dreu, Harinck, & Van Vianen, 1999; Thomas, 1992; Wall & Callister, 1995)" (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). Two kinds of conflict that often arise between the two (in this study) employees are the "task conflict" and the "relationship conflict". "Examples of relationship conflict are conflicts about personal taste, political preferences, values, and interpersonal style. Examples of task conflict are conflicts about the distribution of resources, procedures and policies, and judgments and interpretation of facts" (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003).

To put it in terms more related to this research's theme, "task conflict" is when the two characters working together can't agree on a way to address the task at hand, and "relationship conflict" is when said characters don't agree with the general way the other acts or thinks about various subjects (which, in storytelling terms, may be the reason one addresses the present task in a way the other disagrees). Both of these kinds of conflict exist within at least two of the ones described by Hooks. Whether the present conflict is a task or relationship one, they both are examples of a conflict with someone else or with a situation. In addition to that, task and relationship conflicts are two kinds of conflict that arise from situations that require teamwork, which is very common to occur in organizations, as it will be further looked at in a subchapter ahead.

2.3.2. Causes for conflict

Why does conflict occur between characters working together?

Batty (2008) explains that "in screenwriting contexts, story is often discussed in terms of conflict. Conflict is seen as the lifeblood of drama, providing obstacles to the character

journey. Making the journey difficult for a character creates the need for action, and provides evidence for the audience of how important the goal is, since the actions taken (the type of action, and what lengths a character is willing to go to) show to what degree the character desires the goal, (...)” (p. 17). This statement is especially directed at stories where the hero must embark on a journey to achieve something valuable for the good of his world and/or himself. However, when one considers that each character sees himself as the hero (or lead character) in their own life, it becomes easy to apply this statement to any kind of character, in any kind (and degree) of conflict. The conflict one protagonist may be facing in his journey can be as mundane and simple as trying to catch his favorite program on television, and the obstacle may be a) he has misplaced the remote control, or b) someone else wants to watch a different program at the same time. It may not be a conflict concerning something immense such as the entire planet and the preservation of mankind and “civilization as we know it”, but it’s still something able to provide the audience with one rich, interesting, and engaging narrative, if handled correctly and creatively. Some of the obstacles a protagonist finds along the way may come from the relationship he has with another character. The two characters may both be making each other’s journeys more difficult, or one of them is more passive and his own personality drives the other to feel anger towards him.

In the book *The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation* (Thomas & Johnston, 1981), the authors describe the action and the attitude of several characters from the Disney movies, including the one of Doc from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Hand, 1937). In the moment he first meets Snow White, Doc becomes nervous, and as he tries to find the proper words, Grumpy decides to suggest him something wrong to say, which Doc promptly repeats with no prior reflection, which causes him to be more nervous and confused, and therefore angry at Grumpy. Doc becomes upset with the slightest adversities, and when he gets nervous, like when something unexpected happens, or when he meets a lady, he finds himself with a difficulty in creating an articulate, comprehensible speech, switching words around, and saying others not appropriate for the present subject (pp. 393–394). This situation is an example of how two characters act and react one to the other, and the degree of conflict, however small and brief, which can be generated from said reactions.

Two characters working together to achieve a common goal are essentially a team. Sometimes, it’s possible that inside that team, a rivalry ensues, with both characters wanting to be the leader. That rivalry is a reason for there to be conflict between them, and will cause them to frequently argue with each other throughout their quest. They’ll have different opinions, perhaps about which direction on the road is better, or what they’ll do as soon as they arrive to their destiny, and so on. Often, they’ll wonder if it wouldn’t be better for each to pursue their goal alone, one thinking he’s able to reach it quicker than the other. These arguments may be an opportunity for the audience to get to know more about both characters, like how each behaves in a given situation, and how each reacts when the other character doesn’t like his idea. Their strengths and flaws may be revealed during the course of this conflict between them.



Fig. 2.7. Applejack (left) and Rarity (right)

Concerning the segment about the My Little Pony animated series, discussed in the Historical-Technological Context, this study looks at two of the characters from the current series, since they both have a situation where their contrasting personalities cause them to be in conflict with each other. Applejack lives in a farm, she's hard-working, and is not afraid of getting dirty while performing a task. Rarity works in the fashion business, she's delicate and polite, an artist, and likes to stay clean and organized. The eighth episode of the first season, titled *Look Before You Sleep* (Thiessen, 2010), deals with these two contrasting characters, who find themselves in a situation that forces them to stay together.

This episode begins with both characters cleaning the ground from fallen branches and leaves. Most citizens are doing the same, as a storm is about to begin. Applejack is cleaning the ground successfully, even causing the weaker branches to fall from the trees, so that they fall at this point rather than during the storm. Rarity is close by, cleaning as well, but she's more worried about making the trees look good. Both of them soon start arguing with each other, because they disagree with the other's way of performing the present task, as well as with the other's general way of behaving and thinking. Soon, it starts raining heavily, and the closest shelter the two characters find is their mutual friend's house. Twilight invites them in, and all three of them soon realize the storm won't allow them to leave, so they'll have to stay inside through the night. Applejack and Rarity are thus forced to having to keep dealing with each other. Twilight takes the storm as an opportunity to have a party with her friends, since she had never had one but always wanted. With that in mind, Applejack and Rarity agree to try to tolerate each other, in order to give their friend a good time, and put their argument on hold, something they repeatedly fail at doing.



Fig. 2.8. Buzz Lightyear (left) and Woody (right)

Toy Story (Lasseter, 1995) is a buddy film. The two protagonists, Woody and Buzz Lightyear, are very contrasting to one another, but also happen to be very similar in some aspects.

“The whole idea of a buddy picture is to pair up two characters who are as opposite as possible, and you can’t get more opposite than a spaceman and a cowboy. They represent two different eras of cool toys, and for Woody, it makes him feel even more worried about being passé. But the other thing that’s cool about it is that under their façades, they’re very much the same; they’re both classic American heroes exploring wild frontiers” (Paik, 2007, p. 86).

The main reasons Woody is in conflict with Buzz Lightyear is envy, pride and insecurity. Woody’s pulling string on his back, which reproduces scratchy recordings of his voice, helps him contrast further with Buzz, whose buttons on his chest reproduce a crisp digital voice—the old toy (Woody) begins to feel insecure about his features next to the more sophisticated ones the new toy (Buzz) has. Their owner begins to play more with Buzz instead of him, and that further makes Woody feel he has been replaced, no longer being the favorite toy.

2.3.3. Reasons for two characters to be together despite of their differences

“There can be some advantage in working two characters together. If there can be some kind of tension between them, immediately there will be attitudes and drives and actions that reveal individual traits more clearly than would be brought out by passive agreement. This is something to consider when several of the characters work as a team with one unified purpose” (Thomas & Johnston, 1981, p. 401).

There can be dozens of reasons for two contrasting characters to end up together, and pursuing the same objective. However, two characters who have distinct personalities, opinions, and/or ways of pursuing a certain goal, are likely to decide to end their partnership, maybe even their friendship. So, it’s important to look at reasons why two characters continuously disagreeing with each other stay together despite the existing conflict between them. Maybe unexpected circumstances have brought the two together, and they soon realize they need to help each other to resolve the situation they both now find themselves in. Maybe they’re siblings or have known each other for a very long time, and are used to each other’s company, and maybe because of that, it’s possible for them to have moments where they get along and agree with each other. Regardless of they already knowing each other or not, their common purpose may be what helps them keep themselves motivated enough to keep

pressing forward despite their differences. Maybe they hate each other, or both want to be the leader of the group, or are considerably angry at each other about something one or both did, but their goal distracts them enough for them to put their hatred on hold for the time it takes. Of course, in such a case, especially for comedy purposes, there are always moments where one of them loses his patience and tries to break the partnership or attack the other. And, in that case, there may be a third character with them, who intervenes and helps the two characters calm down and go back to focusing on the task at hand.

In Drew Casper's book, *Hollywood Film 1963–1976* (2011), the author describes the buddy films, calling them stories about friendship between two people of the same gender (mostly male). He explains the genre was structured in terms of a mission journey, in which the duo either started out together or met up with each other (p. 247). As it's been briefly looked at in the Introduction, buddy films, according to Sullivan, Schumer, & Alexander (2008), "focus on the strengths and contrasts of the characters to overcome adversity and become friends" (p. 19). Keeping the purpose of such a story in mind, it's important that the two contrasting characters have at least one thing in common to help them continue to be willing to work together and help each other.

Sometimes, as seen in buddy films like *Toy Story* (Lasseter, 1995), the two characters find themselves in circumstances where they are not given the choice, and must stay together until the situation is solved. Applejack and Rarity, in the episode discussed in the previous subchapter, are forced to stay together because when they are about to end their argument, the storm intensifies, forcing them to find shelter, and both become stuck inside the same house. At that point, they begin trying to tolerate each other.

For two characters to be allies, they either need to have the same objective, or the objective one has, if fulfilled, can lead to the other character having his objective fulfilled as well, being a solid reason for one to help the other and vice-versa. This situation is verifiable in Kenai and Koda's case, in *Brother Bear* (Blaise, 2003), as it will be looked at in the Artistic Context.

It's practically impossible to talk about two characters working together on achieving the same goal, without bringing up the subject of teamwork, which is an essential concept in such a situation. Teamwork exists mainly within organizations, in which two or more employees need to work together on a common assignment. They must be able to bring to their boss quality results and on the time it's determined. Despite the two of them finding it easy to work together or not, they have a job they need to fulfill.

The two characters either already know each other before the beginning of the story, or meet each other shortly afterwards. Whichever the case, the story begins with some unbalance appearing in their land (or in their own personal lives), and it will be necessary to take action. The two characters, after realizing they have a common role (such as the will to bring back the balance to their village), and finding a way to work together to pursue it, they become a team. Two characters forming a team in the narrative may be doing so either for a large purpose or for a quick task where both characters' skills are required.

One common example of two contrasting non-antagonistic characters working together is if one of them is the hero and the other his sidekick. Sidekicks provide assistance to the hero, and while said hero is mostly serious and more focused on the task at hand, the sidekick may provide the comic relief in the story (Vogler, pp. 137–138). Donkey in *Shrek* (Adamson, 2001), is a good example of a “comical sidekick”. He assists Shrek by helping him find the town where the ruler of their land lives, and is the most humorous character in the movie, often fooling around, getting momentarily distracted, and most times, non-stop talking or singing.



Fig. 2.9. Chip (left) and Dale (right)

Chip and Dale are two characters who could be easily placed within a buddy movie as the two main characters. They are different from one another, enter frequently in arguments, but despite their differences, they always find a way to work as a team in their daily tasks of either gathering food for their tree, or ruining Donald Duck’s plans against them. In the end, their friendship remains strong, because they know they complement each other.

The main contrast between both characters is that Dale is less smart than Chip, and more laid-back. Despite that, Chip is not entirely a serious character. He’s able to display as much hyperactivity (typical of a real-life chipmunk) as Dale does. However, being the smarter one probably ends up putting Chip in the position where he’s the one who needs to look after Dale. Several times after one of Dale’s antics, Chip utters the words “you could get in a lot of trouble”.

When the two chipmunks are gathering food, both are equally devoted to the task. Not one is slower than the other, or less interested in the pleasure of eating popcorns or butter made from nuts—as seen in *Corn Chips* (Hannah, 1951) and *All in a Nutshell* (Hannah, 1949) respectively.

When Chip and Dale are in disagreement, Chip adopts a more aggressive attitude to convince Dale to do what he wants, such as following him for Chip to show him something—as seen in *Trailer Horn* (Hannah, 1950). (Coincidentally, it’s also with that attitude that Chip reprehends Dale when he does something which results in failure or pain for Chip.) Alternatively, when it’s Dale who wants to convince Chip to do something, he either ends up accomplishing so in a passive manner, or ends up going ahead with his plan by himself—as seen in *All in a Nutshell* (Hannah, 1949) and in *Test Pilot Donald* (Hannah, 1951) respectively.

In the previous subchapter, related to the causes for conflict, the main reasons why Woody and Buzz from *Toy Story* (Lasseter, 1995) are in conflict were looked at. However, the reasons why these two contrasting characters are united are the following:

- a) During the time Woody and Buzz are lost, Buzz still thinks he's a real space ranger, which makes Woody the only one trying to achieve the goal of returning home (Buzz is trying to return to his fictional home, in another planet). Woody remains with Buzz however, because he knows he must bring him back, to help him prove to Andy's other toys that he didn't try to get rid of him.
- b) Close to the end, Buzz becomes aware of his real identity. Eventually, he and Woody confront each other, Woody helps him accept that truth about him, the two become friends, and what unites them now, besides both wanting to return home, is that both have the goal to honor their roles as toys, and be close to their owner Andy, who needs them.

2.3.4. Ways of solving the conflict

Anytime there's conflict between team members in an organization, a solution is required. The way of managing the conflict may be one of the five: Avoidance, Accommodation, Competition, Compromise, or Collaboration (Hartzell, n.d.). Avoidance is when a team member attempts to ignore the conflict, in order to give both members some time to think and calm down. Accommodation is when a team member tries to end the conflict by giving in to the ideas and wishes of the other. Depending on who's the most experienced and wisest of the two, that choice may either keep the best solution from being reached, or allowing it to be reached sooner. The team member who is accommodating to the idea of the other may be more experienced than him, but is either not a very assertive person, or is seeking to get along with the other, or trying to make the other feel welcome by letting his idea be the one they're going with. If the team member accommodating continues to think his own idea is better, it's probable that sooner or later, the argument between the two, about whose idea is better, will return. Competition is what usually happens in movies and series when two groups/parties or characters disagree with each other, and it serves for both to learn from their mistake by the end. The objective of both, by competing, is to win no matter the expense, and regardless of who's right or wrong. In that situation, the objective of each team member is to be considered the most powerful of the two, and able to make the other take his opinions and ideas as the best ones. In Compromise, both members try to find a middle ground between both ways of pursuing an objective. It's considered a lose-lose strategy, since both team members need to give up something they want, and would prefer to be able to keep. Collaboration is the win-win conflict management style, in which the team members work to find a solution that both are satisfied with, without feeling they're sacrificing something. When choosing this conflict management style, it's important that both parties set aside their personal differences and disagreements, so that the problem can be addressed in a calm and direct way. Also, both parties must respect the other's opinions, and be opened to receive ideas that may be better than their own, and must be willing to put in the necessary effort for the collaboration to be

executed properly. The results from the collaboration may take more time to reach, but prove worth it.

Fisher, Ury and Patton, in their book *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (2011) defend that every person is a negotiator, since negotiation is an important part of life; every day and everywhere, negotiations happen in everyone's lives (p. 6). Negotiation is an important step in the maintenance of the relationship between two friends or coworkers who often argue. "People differ, and they use negotiation to handle their differences. Whether in business, government, or the family, people reach most decisions through negotiation. Even when they go to court, they almost always negotiate a settlement before trial." Therefore, through this book, the authors help people find the ways to negotiate efficiently in the face of conflict, in order to achieve positive results for both sides, whether it's a conflict with a friend, a coworker, or an entity. It's important to find a common ground between both parties, so that relationships can be maintained, and the goal can be reached on time.

The authors talk about two usually wrong ways to negotiate, which are the soft and hard ones, and not very different from the Accommodation and the Competition conflict managing styles explained above. A soft negotiator, in order to avoid personal conflict, prepares himself to give in to the demands from the other side, so that an agreement can be reached soon. However, by doing so, he ends up exploited and resentful. A hard negotiator has winning as his main goal. Seeing the negotiation as a contest of wills, he repeatedly tries to take a position more extreme than the one taken by the other side, expecting to come out as a winner. However, by doing so, the other side may start doing the same thing, causing both sides to finish the negotiation in bad terms, and with their resources exhausted. With that, the authors defend another way to negotiate, which is both soft and hard. They call it the "principled negotiation", the one their book deals with the most. This method "suggests that you look for mutual gains wherever possible, and that where your interests conflict, you should insist that the result be based on some fair standards independent of the will of either side. The method of principled negotiation is hard on the merits, soft on the people. It employs no tricks and no posturing. Principled negotiation shows you how to obtain what you are entitled to and still be decent. It enables you to be fair while protecting you against those who would take advantage of your fairness" (p. 6).

One step for the principled negotiation, is to separate the people from the issue (p. 13). Let's say a person or character (named "A", for this example), does not agree with the way his partner or friend (named "B") is pursuing their common objective, since he believes B's decision will either cause them to go slower, or simply feels uncomfortable in following other people's ideas. When something like this happens, A must look at the problem he's having with B separately from him, in order to keep being able to remember his appreciation for B. After doing so, A can call on B, and calmly explain to him how he feels about B's way of pursuing their objective. B, becoming aware of this, may either a) apologize and start to work on how to adapt his way of working to A's preferences so that both ways can meet in the middle, or b) he may start to explain why he thinks his way is more efficient and, if it is a matter of B having a different temperament and way to look at the world, both may find a way

to keep pursuing their goal together, while letting both work the way they prefer and without keeping each other from doing their part efficiently. For example, if A works faster during the day, but B works faster during the night, and A would like B to be able to keep up with him, both must learn to respect each other's natural rhythms, and find ways for both to help each other play their parts. Either one of them conforms and works at the speed the other prefers, and at the time he prefers, or both continue to work at their preferred speeds, and timings of such speed, all the while being able to compensate and keep up with the other as the work advances.

Another step for the principled negotiation is to invent options for mutual gain (p. 31). Maybe it's not easy for either A or B to adapt each other's rhythms to coincide, since one of them or neither is willing to change or, alternatively, they are willing to, but the results are not as efficient as it would be hoped. So, a different, more creative approach to the problem is required. Comparing the solution both parties seek to a pie (as the authors do), before it's divided, one is able to invent ways to expand said pie—inventing a solution that pleases both sides, and which didn't seem to exist before. For starters, both parties think they're right, that one's own view is the one to be followed. They may be right to think so, but they must not forget to try and look at the problem through the other's eyes. Until they realize this, starting a negotiation seems pointless to them.

Vogler (1998) describes the Hero's Journey in his book, and one of its stages, "Test, Allies, Enemies", represents a point in the hero's adventure where he has already left the world he's familiar with, being now in the Special World. In that stage, the hero begins to get acquainted with the new people and rules, and the way he will adjust to that mysterious new world will be through tests, such as facing traps, and meeting other characters, who will be either enemies or allies. While looking for allies, the hero will have the opportunity to find out who is trustworthy and who isn't. After the hero has gained allies, they will form a team. With his newly-formed team, they'll start to make plans and try to figure out what their next move is, in order to defeat the evil that has brought the unbalance upon their worlds in the beginning of the narrative. If, at that point, the hero or heroes are in conflict with each other or one of the sidekicks, the moment they're making plans is the ideal for them to work on solving it, so that the team's plans can be both planned out and followed as smoothly as possible.

As it's been described in the causes for there to be conflict between two allies, one of said causes may be rivalry. If the story has two characters sharing the hero's role, they may at some point start arguing about who should be making the decisions during the rest of their quest. Both may be confident on their idea being the best (*Competition*, according to Hartzell), or perhaps one of them tries to understand the other's point of view, or keeps presenting new ideas anytime one is rejected (*Accommodation*, or *Compromise*).

If the conflicting heroes have a team, they may decide to ask them to vote and decide which one of them should be the leader. However, that decision may make the situation worse, since it will divide the team. The ones who prefer one of the heroes as leader may form a grudge against the ones who prefer the other, especially if these were on the side that lost. In addition,

even though the two heroes may stop arguing after the decision is made, they will likely continue to be in conflict with each other. The one who lost in the voting may feel betrayed and will keep thinking his way would be better, and the one who won will feel bitter for the other to be reacting that way, and both will be hesitant to talk or even look at the other. Therefore, it will be better for the two heroes to be able to solve their rivalry only with each other, basing their own opinions on what they believe is better for the mission itself and not for their own pride.

If the conflict is between the hero and his sidekick, the way to solve their conflict may be simpler than in the rivalry case. Some of the characters the hero encounters that become his sidekicks may also be sources of tests (or be themselves tests) for the hero to pass. For example, while the hero's new sidekick may be helpful, he may also be irritating in some degree, and the hero will have to find a way to learn to tolerate that side of him. Passing that test may prepare the hero for future challenges in his quest, or perhaps, having such an irritating sidekick may help the hero learn how to be better with people, in case he wasn't very sociable before the adventure began.

Applejack and Rarity, near the end of the discussed episode, come across a task that poses a difficult challenge for both of them. Applejack tries to face it by herself, using her strength, but when she realizes she's not able to, she apologizes to Rarity, recognizes her attention to details is useful for the present task, and the two then begin working together relying on each other's contrasting skills to complete the task properly. They solve their conflict by realizing that there come times where doing things only one's way can jeopardize the entire operation. So, they decide to embrace those differences of theirs, and become willing to sometimes try doing things the other character's way, since it may provide quicker and more effective results. Some tasks (or in the very least, one of its steps) require more thought and reflection, while others require a more physical approach.

2.3.5. Consequences brought by the conflict

Walt Disney said that "In most instances, the driving force behind the action is the mood, the personality, the attitude of the character—or all three. Therefore, the mind is the pilot. We think of things before the body does them" (Thomas & Johnston, 1981, p. 93). This means that a character, just like a person, is able to make another one react to him. The way he reacts may affect his mood, and therefore affect what he will do or say in the next moments. This fact is frequently one of the keys that make the story proceed. Since a story revolves around its characters, and what they say or do is almost always caused by what has happened the moment before (be it something they witnessed happening, or something that was said to them), whichever the reaction the character has, will cause him to make choices that have the power to set the direction in which the narrative will go. That character may be the hero or one of his allies. It may also be the villain or one of his henchmen. The way either character reacts to an event or another character, and the choices he makes based on that reaction will either help them win, or cause them to lose points in relation to the other team.

From this perspective, it's possible to conclude that how the hero relates himself with another character will have some sort of influence in the quest he's on, and therefore, once the quest is over, the hero will have evolved, grown into a new and better person. Sometimes, certain characters appear in his life, and make it more difficult for him, since their presence, with their contrasting characteristics, bring forth new challenges and more obstacles for the hero to overcome. But after resolving the conflict, the character (maybe both) evolve. The conflict contributes for the growth of the character.

At the end of *The Adventures of Tintin: The Secret of the Unicorn* (Spielberg, 2011), Captain Haddock still enjoys drinking, and Tintin still somewhat frowns at it. But now, he is more tolerant of it, as he now sees it as part of Haddock's character; and because they both know that from now on, he won't abuse it. This adventure helped Haddock realize he no longer needs the drink, since it served as an escaping vehicle away from sorrow. Having met Tintin, he gained a new perspective of life, and restored his faith in both himself and his legacy of a lineage of brave sea captains. In addition to all that, Tintin has helped him recover the family's home, the Moulinsart Mansion (known as Marlinspike Hall in the English language), as well as all its assets.

Applejack and Rarity are mostly acquaintances at the point in the series the discussed episode occurs. The main reason they keep meeting each other is because of their mutual friend, Twilight. As they spend more time together, situations like the one in the episode gradually help them form a strong friendship of their own.

Eventually, despite Woody and Buzz's contrasts, their similarities are what becomes stronger at the end. As they overcome the situation they find themselves in, being away from home, they soon form a partnership, followed by a close friendship, even sharing the job of Andy's Toys' chief.



Fig. 2.10. The two fairies, Merryweather (left) and Flora (right), arguing over the color of the dress

Sleeping Beauty (Geronimi, 1958) focuses on Flora, Fauna, and Merryweather, the Three Good Fairies, as they work to prevent Princess Aurora's whereabouts from being discovered by the evil fairy, Maleficent, until the sunset of the princess' sixteenth birthday, so that she can't find her and set in motion her plan to kill her.

Flora is the self-proclaimed leader of the good fairies. Her favorite color is pink, and Merryweather's is blue. At one point in the film, the three fairies are preparing a surprise birthday party for Princess Aurora (or Briar Rose, as they call her). Merryweather is eager to help Flora make a dress for the princess while Fauna bakes the cake, but Flora instructs her to

go instead clean and dust the house. Merryweather reluctantly agrees, but even so, she does what she can to give the dress her own personal touch. Flora is determined to give the dress a pink color, but Merryweather, every time she gets a chance to use her wand, turns the dress into blue. Flora and Merryweather then start arguing, and back-and-forth changing the color of the dress. This immature fight between the two fairies eventually causes them to unintentionally blow their cover. With colored magic beams flying all around the house, eventually some of them, unbeknownst to the three of them, fly up the chimney at the same time the Maleficent's crow is flying by. When it sees the magic beams, the crow goes back to inform the evil fairy of its discovery. Later on, the evil fairy captures the princess and succeeds at, as she believes, killing her.

The argument between the two fairies about which color to give to clothing in general (conflict between two characters) is a running-joke throughout the film, but it's in this specific moment that the joke plays a very significant part in the narrative, causing it to advance. The three fairies don't show clear signs of evolution throughout the story, though, probably a choice from the writer.

2.3.6. The archetypes and their functions in the narrative and the relationship

The archetypes are functions or masks that can be worn by any character in the narrative. Some characters have a particular mask assigned to them for most of the story, but depending on the point of it's at, he can temporarily wear others.

It's possible to see the Hero's Journey as an archetype, considering that, like the others, it is a symbol that has always been present in the collective unconscious of every civilization and since the beginning. With this in mind, it's possible to look at the stage "Tests, Allies, Enemies" as the one every character in a story goes through when they're trying to overcome an obstacle. In that stage, the character, namely the hero, experiences tests that prepare him for the challenges ahead. While in this stage, he finds several kinds of conflict, and must learn how to solve it. With every attempt, the character learns something about the obstacle. What works and what doesn't, and why. The character gradually transforms himself in order to become something capable of dealing with the obstacle—he evolves while overcoming a challenge.

This study will not look directly at the information found in the works and studies made by Joseph Campbell and Carl Jung, the reason for that choice being that the author Christopher Vogler has already successfully translated said information to the audio-visual field, which is the one of this Master's Degree.

In his book, Vogler (1998) talks about the several characters in a story, as being extensions (or facets) of the personality of the hero in the story, or its writer. That fact can manifest itself in the relationships between the hero and the other characters in the narrative. Those extensions of the hero can be understood as archetypes, a term employed by the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, and which meaning is "ancient patterns of personality that are the

shared heritage of the human race” (p. 29), since they all seem to be part of a collective unconscious present in everyone’s minds and every culture, and manifested in their dreams and raw imagination, from the beginning of civilization. Archetypes serve to describe the many types of characters found in stories, and it’s possible to identify them in tales that have been told thousands of years ago. Vogler explains that it’s important to understand the concept of archetype in order to understand each character’s purpose and function throughout the story. Each archetype has a function attributed to it, and it never changes. If a certain character noticeably has that function in the story, and if the writer is aware of the rules, that character represents the corresponding archetype. Even though an archetype never changes its meaning, a character may change the archetype it represents, depending on the function it’s carrying in a given point of the story, and the function it’s carrying in the next. A character may be able to represent several archetypes throughout a single story, depending on, and according to, the direction the story is going. After the character has fulfilled its function, the story will proceed and take on a new direction. At that point, the character with the fulfilled function will either leave, or in the case of this study, receive a new function, become another archetype, and keep accompanying the hero. “The archetypes can be thought of as masks, worn by the characters temporarily as they are needed to advance the story” (p. 30). Since the Hero is itself an archetype, the hero too can change his archetype throughout the story, with the same situation described above applying to him as well.

It’s during the “Tests, Allies, Enemies” stage of the Hero’s Journey that most of the story’s archetypes are revealed. As the hero meets enemies and allies within the Special World, each of those characters will have a certain assigned function (and therefore a certain archetype). Those characters bring the hero his first tests, which he must pass in order to be ready for the next, more dangerous ones.

Back to talking about the archetypes as being facets of the hero’s/writer’s personality, it can be viewed as something very tangible in real-life. The writer of a story is writing about what he or she knows. Therefore, the characters possess traits that the writer himself can understand and write about because he himself possesses them, or has learned from someone he knows. Another way of seeing this, is that, just like a person is influenced by other people around him, absorbing a few ways of thinking, acting and speaking from the people he interacts with, the hero too gathers and incorporates traits from the other characters that accompany him in his journey (which happens especially during the “Tests, Allies, Enemies” stage), even if they only appear briefly. It’s another reason the hero evolves along the way in his quest. Not only he is passing tests and overcoming an immense and frightening challenge, he’s learning from the other characters how to be a better, more complete person. Stories can therefore be seen as metaphors of the general human existence. “Archetypes are expressions of the parts that make up a complete personality” (p. 39).

There are many archetypes, but the ones this study believes to be more relevant, and easily attributed to each of the characters talked about in it (depending on the story they’re in, and the quest they both are on), are the following: the Hero, the Mentor, the Shapeshifter, and the Trickster. The Threshold Guardian and the Shadow will be looked at as well, since it’s

possible even for the characters on the side of the hero to represent those archetypes briefly in the narrative.

The Hero is generally altruistic, selfless. He's making the sacrifice to leave his comfort zone to search for some kind of cure for the evil or unbalance that has been brought to his world. However, because no person is perfect, the hero, like everyone else, should be imperfect as well. He could start his journey as stubborn, and a bit self-centered. A few flaws are important in the characters, in order for the audience to be able to better relate to them. And the hero is the one they'll be rooting for, so it's important to make sure that the hero feels to the audience as a genuine human being, imperfections and everything else. A narrative is stronger and better received if a flawed and weak hero, through the quest becomes gradually stronger, kinder, more noble, and after overcoming the challenge brought by the narrative conflict, comes back restored, with less flaws and more qualities and strengths than when he started. A warning, however, the hero's flaws need to be well-balanced with his qualities, so that the audience can still like him, and be eager to see him succeed in his quest. If he is too rebellious, unintelligent or unfriendly, and there aren't many indicators along the first moments of the narrative that help the audience see his more humane and kinder side, he either needs to be rewritten, or is better suited to be another archetype, such as a Trickster or a Shapeshifter. "Every well-rounded hero has a trace of this tragic flaw, some weakness or fault that makes him thoroughly human and real. Perfect, flawless heroes aren't very interesting, and are hard to relate to. Even Superman has weak spots which humanize him and make him sympathetic" (p. 90).

Other characters in the story can play the role of the hero, either alongside him all throughout the story, or for a small portion of it. In other words, other characters can temporarily wear the Hero Mask, for example when the hero is not able to escape a present threat, and another character appears to help and assist him, and either they both defeat/overcome the threat, or the temporary hero opens a window of opportunity for the actual hero to escape and resume his quest. Sometimes, although not heavily looked at in this study, these characters may die while helping the hero, or at least become severely injured. It may serve as a way for the audience to like those characters more, in case they didn't like them much until that moment.

The Mentor is usually an old man or woman, but it's possible to have any kind of character play the role. In this study, except for Tanana in *Brother Bear* (Blaise, 2003), none of the characters looked at is old, but some of them, at some point in the story serve as the mentor to the other. A mentor is someone who tells the hero something about the world he's about to face, with the coming tests and threats. He teaches him something about life, or helps him realize something important for the story to reach the point it needs to. This archetype represents the wiser and nobler facet of the hero/writer, it's his conscience. Some characters who are accompanying the hero, at some point of the story, in a pivotal scene, may start to play the role of the mentor and try to make the hero realize something that he needs to realize and understand (however stubborn he may be) in order for him to be successful. Donkey, close to the end, helps Shrek finally understand that he needs friends, and helps him realize

that he needs to go confess his feelings to the woman he loves before she marries another man.

Chip and Dale can both be considered mentors of each other. They both wish to gather nuts up in their tree, but along the way, either character causes the other to change direction and follow him. As they pursue their common objective, Dale may be distracted by something else, and get into trouble. Chip notices it, and goes to rescue him, scolding him afterwards. In other situations, Dale may notice something else Chip hasn't, and it may turn out to be something better than what they were both trying to achieve moments ago; either food, or some way to have fun. In another example, Chip may find something interesting and want to go show to Dale, but Dale is not interested. So Chip shows him by force the thing he finds interesting, and such gesture is revealed as worth it, because Dale then becomes as amazed as Chip was.

The Shapeshifter is unpredictable, since he's a very flexible character, who often changes his behavior to meet the needs of any situation in the plot. Through the course of the story, the hero may find himself confused by this character, not sure how to interact with him, or if he can trust him or not. The Shapeshifter can also be confusing to the audience, not knowing what to expect of him, and whether he's really on the side of the hero or not. And if he is on his side, is he willing to stay that way until the end, or will his loyalty shift to the other side if he finds himself on the losing side? These doubts the hero has about him, or just the enigmatic personality the Shapeshifter displays, can often be a reason for conflict between them, and lead to arguments between the two.

Vogler explains that "Shapeshifters can also be found in so-called "buddy movies" in which the story centers on two male or two female characters who share the role of hero. Often one is more conventionally heroic and easier for the audience to identify with. The second character, while of the same sex as the main hero, will often be a Shapeshifter, whose loyalty and true nature are always in question. In the comedy *The In-Laws*, the "straight" hero, Alan Arkin, is nearly driven crazy by the Shapeshifting of his buddy, Peter Falk, a CIA agent" (p. 70).

In *Sleepy Hollow* (Burton, 1999), Ichabod Crane is lead to believe that Katrina Van Tassel is betraying him, making his investigations more difficult, but soon discovers everything she had been doing was to protect him from the Headless Horseman. She's a particular kind of Shapeshifter, one that is always an ally, on the side of the hero, but he (and sometimes the audience too) doesn't always see that, sometimes thinking the contrary, mainly because she keeps secrets from him. If the hero is patient with the Shapeshifter, "the truth may eventually come out" (Vogler, 1998, p. 69).

The Trickster can be unpredictable as well. He often provides the comic relief in a story, and is often a friend of the hero. Chip and Dale can be considered both the heroes of the story and mentors of each other, but Dale is clearly the Trickster of the duo. The characters with that archetype often engage into antics the hero and the audience didn't see coming. This is especially easy to accomplish thanks to the animation medium, since it makes it possible for a

character to execute all kinds of impossible and humorous feats. The Trickster is mischievous, frequently ruining the status quo. He may be easily distracted while he and the hero are performing the task at hand, or, alternatively, he suddenly wants to change the way they're doing things. Such actions can often cause the hero to feel irritated by him, which can lead to tension and arguments. But often, the Trickster's intentions are good, and serve to teach the hero and the audience not to take life so seriously all the time, and even to help him dare to try doing something new. Donkey, in *Shrek* (Adamson, 2001), often plays the Trickster role.

The Shadow represents the hidden and contained negative aspects of the writer's personality, and usually the one who is responsible for bringing the conflict into the world the main characters inhabit. Villains, antagonists and enemies in stories are considered the Shadow. Villains wish to bring destruction to the hero's world and defeat them as well, coming as far as willing to kill them. Antagonists may not be as hostile, but still pose a threat to the balance in the main characters' lives. In several artistic examples looked at in this study, there exists a villain or an antagonist, a primary source of conflict and unbalance usually outside the relationship between the two characters. Sometimes, within the contrasting relationship between the two characters, one of them (especially the one who throughout the story generally plays the role of the Trickster or the Shapeshifter) momentarily plays the Shadow, being in some way deliberately responsible for a current conflict between them. In some stories, especially ones without a villain, the conflicting relationship between two characters is in fact the antagonistic aspect of the story. Sometimes, it's an outside force, and the two main characters must learn to deal with it and bring back the balance, while also trying to learn how to deal with each other; learn how to work and stick together.

The way to defeat the Shadow is to take away his power. The reason a Shadow has power is because it's unknown. Therefore, the way to remove its power is to take it to the light, uncover it, gain an understanding of it. With full knowledge of the Shadow, the hero will know how to overcome it, and possibly, the Shadow will cease to be one, but an ally (Vogler, 1998, p. 74).

The Threshold Guardian can be working for the Shadow or simply being neutral, but in either case, his function is to be an obstacle, to keep the hero from continuing his quest and achieve his goal. There are rare examples of Threshold Guardians that have good intentions from the beginning, but the hero is not aware of it until much later in the story. Some of those examples are looked at in this study. "Many heroes (...) encounter Threshold Guardians, and understanding their nature can help determine how to handle them" (Vogler, 1998, p. 57). "Sometimes a hero must become a Shapeshifter to escape a trap or get past a Threshold Guardian" (Vogler, 1998, p. 69). "Testing of the hero is the primary dramatic function of the Threshold Guardian. (...) How to deal with these apparent obstacles? Heroes have a range of options. They can turn around and run, attack the opponent head-on, use craft or deceit to get by, bribe or appease the Guardian, or make an **Ally** of a presumed enemy" (Vogler, 1998, p. 58). "Successful heroes learn to recognize Threshold Guardians not as threatening enemies, but as useful Allies (...). Threshold Guardians who appear to be attacking may in fact be doing the hero a huge favor" (Vogler, 1998, p. 59).

“Characters without inner challenges seem flat and uninvolved, however heroically they may act. They need an inner problem, a personality flaw or a moral dilemma to work out. They need to learn something in the course of the story: how to get along with others, how to trust themselves, how to see beyond outward appearances. Audiences love to see characters learning, growing, and dealing with the inner and outer challenges of life” (pp. 87–88).

The characters a hero encounters along the way have an assigned job in the narrative, a function that they fulfill through the role they have, and in the way their relationships with the hero affect him.

When creating the characters for a given story, it’s important to decide, not just what kind of character the hero will be (his characteristics, the challenges he needs to face in order to fulfill his destiny), but also how many other characters will interact with him as he goes on his journey. It’s important that each character contributes to the story, otherwise it comes off as unnecessary. One of the best ways to create the right number of characters for a given story and have a complete cast, with not too many characters and no characters missing, is for the writer to think about what he wants to happen to the hero as he goes on his quest, and what characters will trigger each of those events, which may represent challenges, obstacles, loyal allies, etc. This study, as it was previously stated, focuses on relationships between two non-antagonistic characters. They are friends/partners/allies, together on the same quest, but also represent a challenge or an obstacle to each other, at least one of them does. They may both be the heroes, or it’s just one hero, with a close friend/ally.

It’s fair to say that a villain is usually the character who brings forth the challenges and obstacles the hero faces throughout his quest. He’s also usually the one that shares the most contrasting differences with the hero. While the hero wishes to do good, the villain wishes to bring harm; the hero is selfless, the villain is selfish and sometimes even vain. With that said, the reason why the villains are being so vaguely looked at, is because this study is particularly interested in the stories where a villain doesn’t necessarily exist, and the main focus of the plot (or a significant portion of it) is the interaction between the two characters who share the leading role (or hero whose ally is very close to the role) and how one evolves thanks to the other. The two characters may very well have strikingly contrasting personalities, but if there’s one thing that the two have in common is that none wishes the other’s harm (or wishes so only for a limited amount of time), and as far as winning or losing goes in terms of the bigger picture (the narrative conflict), both characters are on the side of the good guys.

2.4. Artistic Context

Now that the Historical-Technological and Theoretic Contexts have been looked at, it’s time to look at some artistic works that better illustrate the subjects already discussed. Some of the present artistic works have already been mentioned in the two previous contexts, but now they’ll be observed here in more detail.

(It's worth it to clear up that some artistic works that are present in the two previous contexts, are not in this one, since all that was necessary to point out about them has already been done in the respective sub-chapters.)

2.4.1. *The Hardest Jigsaw*



Fig. 2.11. The landscape the small green creature (left) intended to show the young girl (right) by stealing the last piece of her jigsaw puzzle

Eric Anderson, a student at CalArts, completed a project in 2010, a short animated film with the title *The Hardest Jigsaw* (Anderson, 2010).

In the film, there's a nameless young girl who is a jigsaw puzzle enthusiast, showing it by having several assembled ones framed in the walls of her house. Right in the beginning of the film, she receives a new puzzle at her door, and locks herself in, in order to be able to finish it without being disturbed. Later that night, when she has nearly completed the puzzle, a mysterious small green creature appears on top of the table and steals the last piece from her. In the following sequence, the girl chases the green creature throughout various locations, similar to the ones in planet Earth. The two characters eventually arrive to a cliff, and the green creature accidentally lets the last piece fall just as the girl was able to catch the creature. She looks at it, angry and disappointed, but then, the green creature makes several other giant ones, and similar to it, appear in the landscape in front of them—as seen in the picture above. The girl (and the audience) recognizes the newly-formed landscape as bearing a very close resemblance to the puzzle she was making before the small green creature stole the piece, and she is pleased by the sight. She soon wakes up, back in her home, and is last seen leaving, with her backpack, presumably to go to class, and the camera pans over to the wall to reveal that the girl has framed just the one piece instead of the entire puzzle.

The situation in the relationship between the two main characters is very similar to the one seen between the two main characters in this Master's Degree's final project, *A Helping Hoot*, which will be further looked at in Chapter 3. That situation in the relationship between the two characters in the present short film is: one character is trying to help the other, but that character doesn't know it, which leads to misunderstandings, which in turn lead to tension and conflict between both characters. The girl believes that the mysterious small green creature is being merely mischievous, but in truth, it wants to show her something bigger and more amazing than the plain puzzle she was putting together in a closed dark room. The green creature cannot speak, however, so the means it uses to cause the girl to follow it involve

running away with one thing she really wants. Because of those facts, the girl quickly develops a grudge against the creature, thinking it's a foe instead of a friend. It's only at the end, after the action and tension have grown to the fullest, that the girl discovers the truth. Afterwards, she comes out of this quest having become a better person, who now appreciates more the outside world and the simpler things in life, such as the one piece from a larger puzzle that made her embark on an unforgettable journey.

The girl can be instantly assumed to be wearing the Hero mask, but in the green creature's case, it needs some further analysis, as it is possible to see said character both as a Shapeshifter and a Threshold Guardian. The reason why it can be understood as a Shapeshifter is because near the end, as soon as the girl (and the audience) realizes the green creature's real intentions, the way she (as well as the audience) looks at it changes completely. The reason why the green creature can also be understood as a Threshold Guardian, at least from the girl and the audience's point of view, is because it's keeping her away from achieving her goal (finishing her puzzle), by taking what she needs in order to do it (the last piece). In the end, it's revealed that what the creature was really trying to do was preventing her from achieving something not as good as what it had to show her. That realization helped the girl feel happier and more satisfied than how she would have felt after finishing the puzzle the way she intended. If the green creature can in fact be considered a Threshold Guardian, regardless of said archetype being traditionally connected to the villain, regardless of whose point of view is being discussed, and regardless of the actual truth about the creature's intentions, then this may be a rare case of a friendly and misunderstood Threshold Guardian. The green creature is not a guardian who tries to interrupt the hero's quest, as it's typically the case, but one who makes her find the right direction by forcing her out of her pre-chosen course.

One plausible way to interpret this short film, which is likely what Anderson had in mind, in case he's read Vogler's *The Writer's Journey* (1998), is the Hero's Lack (p. 90): Usually, in stories, heroes begin their quest because they're searching for something they need, something they are lacking, whether it's an object, a relative/friend who is lost or has been kidnapped, or a flaw that the hero wishes to turn into a quality. It's therefore a search for a *missing piece*, which is literally the quest the girl in the short film enters. The last piece has been taken away from her, and she wants to get it back, as she believes it will *make her whole*. The concept doesn't get translated to the short film without a slight twist, however. At the end of the quest, the girl realizes that this journey has taken her to something far greater than what she was striving for, and preserves the single puzzle piece as a reminder of that wholeness she has discovered. And the audience members, who have witnessed the girl's journey, feel satisfied to see her going from the previous incomplete state to the new complete one, as they empathized with her in all the stages.

In this subchapter, a short film, similar to this Master's Degree's final project, was looked at. The plot was explained, through the conflict between the two main characters (the girl and the

small green creature), and it was possible to conclude what archetypes each character represent. The plot was also interpreted applying Vogler's Hero's Lack, which show that the creator of the short film likely decided to apply the concept in a literal way—a quest to search for a missing piece, and coming back whole, which is essentially what happens to the young girl in the story.

2.4.2. *Brother Bear*



Fig. 2.12. Bear Kenai (bottom) and Koda (top)



Fig. 2.13. Human Kenai (left), Sitka (center), and Denahi (right)

Brother Bear (Blaise, 2003) possesses a storyline strongly driven by the interactions between the main characters.

The lead character, Kenai is a young hunter, and the youngest of three brothers. His older brother is named Sitka, and the middle one is named Denahi.

Kenai doesn't like bears, regarding them as thieves. He gets turned into a bear himself, and soon meets a younger bear (a cub) named Koda, who has gotten separated from his mother. Koda is the second lead character, and throughout the film, he and Kenai develop a brotherly relationship. The circumstances that lead to that conclusion are provided by a chain of events, which are as follows:

Kenai ties up a basket (built by Denahi) filled with fish in a rather poor fashion. As a result, a bear passes by and, able to reach it, steals the fish, as well as the basket they're in.

As an attempt to compensate for his mistake, Kenai sets off to bring the basket back. On his way up the mountain, he finds the basket, and the bear which stole it. Because of his dislike for bears, he goes after it. The bear, disturbed by Kenai, attacks him. Kenai's brothers arrive, and the three fight the menacing bear.

Sitka sacrifices his life to save his brothers, by causing one part of the mountain to collapse. However, the bear survives.

Vengeful, Kenai sets off to kill the bear for what it did to Sitka, even though it was Kenai who caused it, by not leaving the bear alone. Before going, Denahi tries to stop him, saying it won't solve anything. But Kenai, determined, says he's not going to be sit and do nothing.

Up in the mountain, Kenai corners the bear and succeeds at killing it. Sitka's spirit appears and, as he takes the bear's body away, transforms Kenai into one, because what he did was wrong. (By being a bear, Kenai would be able to see things through their eyes and realize his mistake.)

Denahi shows up, finding Kenai's clothes and a bear next to them. He thinks Kenai is the bear from before, and that it has killed his younger brother. Kenai, dizzy and confused from the transformation, falls off the mountain and is taken away by the river. Denahi, because of what Kenai had said to him before going, follows his example of not being sit and do nothing, and sets off to kill the bear, without knowing who he really is.

Kenai later wakes up by the river, and Tanana, the shaman-woman from his tribe (who also plays the traditional role of the Mentor), is by his side. (Somehow, she knows the bear is Kenai.) She helps him realize what has happened, and tells him it was Sitka's spirit who did that to him. She also tells him that in order to return to normal, he must go see his older brother again, in the mountain "where the lights touch the earth". (Those lights are the northern lights, who Kenai's tribe believes are the spirits of the earth.)

Kenai gets stuck in a bear trap, left hanging by his foot. As he tries to free himself, Koda appears—the two main characters meet for the first time. Koda offers to help Kenai down, but he refuses, since he hates bears, and shows a particular dislike for having a kid around him. Koda doesn't leave, and instead keeps talking about varied subjects, much to Kenai's growing frustration. Eventually, he asks Koda if he has anywhere to go. Koda tells him he was going to the salmon run, and offers a deal that if he manages to get Kenai down, he'll agree to go with him. Sceptic, Kenai sarcastically agrees, and Koda manages to release him very easily.

Denahi appears. Kenai realizes he's trying to kill him, and he and Koda run from him, managing to hide. Kenai tells Koda he doesn't intend to go with him to the salmon run, but Koda, while trying to convince him, confesses he doesn't know where his mother is and hopes to find her there. He also tells Kenai, through the detailed and enthusiastic description of the salmon run, that it's very close to the mountain "where the lights touch the earth". Kenai accepts Koda's company, on the condition of him helping him getting there, and not slowing him down. (Kenai only accepts Koda's company when he tells him he knows the location of where he's trying to go.)

Koda sees Kenai as a brother, but Kenai doesn't feel the same way. During their journey however, he becomes more used to Koda, and the more time they spend together, the more Kenai grows to like him. By the time they arrive in the salmon run, Kenai and Koda's friendship grew to the point of Kenai now seeing him as a brother as well. (Koda finds out from one of the bears that his mother hasn't arrived yet.)

Koda tells Kenai and the other bears how he got separated from his mother. Kenai recognizes the events and realizes the bear he killed was Koda's mother. He now understands his mistake, and the reason why Sitka turned him into a bear.

Kenai regretfully confesses to Koda what he did, and Koda runs away from him, crying.

Sad, and feeling there's no hope left to restore his relationship with Koda, Kenai proceeds to the mountain alone.

Koda, seeing how the two moose brothers (who have been accompanying them) solve their arguments in spite of everything, decides to give Kenai another chance, and goes after him.

An eagle, which is Sitka's spiritual symbol, guides Denahi, and him and Kenai find each other up in the mountain. Koda arrives and tries to help Kenai. Sitka's spirit intervenes before Denahi can inflict a fatal blow on Kenai, and changes him back into human. Denahi realizes what he could have done, and the three brothers are reunited once more (albeit briefly). Koda witnesses everything, and Kenai asks Sitka to change him back into a bear: he understands that Koda needs him. With both Denahi and Sitka's approval, Kenai is transformed back. (Koda also gets to say goodbye to his mother, whose spirit appears briefly.)

In conclusion, the interactions between the main characters (Kenai, Koda, Denahi and Sitka) are what drives the narrative conflict of this film.

If Kenai hadn't pursued the bear, the animal would not have attacked him and his brothers, and Sitka would not have died. If Sitka had not died, Kenai would not have wanted to avenge his death, and Koda's mother would still be alive. If Kenai hadn't killed the bear, he wouldn't have become one. And if he hadn't shared with Denahi his own desire to kill the bear in order to avenge their brother's death, Denahi wouldn't have decided to do the same after thinking the bear had killed Kenai as well.

Kenai, being the hero, is the character that evolves the most during the film, a transformation which is mostly thanks to Sitka and Koda. Besides learning to respect the animals, he also learns what it means to altruistically take care of someone else. He used to be a younger brother of three, with no parents, and Sitka, his older brother, was the one who protected and took care of both him and Denahi. Through the course of the film, in a way, Kenai learns how to be like Sitka, with a new younger brother, with no parents as well.

There seem to be several Mentors in this story, such as Tanana, an obvious example, but also Sitka and Koda, who each play the role in some moments throughout the story. Sitka tries to discipline both his younger brothers, and gives advices to Kenai, which he doesn't always follow. (The two of them get along better than Kenai and Denahi do, though.) Later on,

Tanana informs Kenai about the journey that awaits him. She doesn't explain him much, other than where he needs to go to, and that he'll know better why he was turned into a bear when he arrives in his destination. Then there's Koda. Through his view of humans, filled with fear, Kenai manages to understand the situation through another point of view. The humans kill the bears, as they see them as thieves and a threat to their kind, but Kenai now sees that the bears themselves see the humans as a threat as well. He further understands that sensation as he and Koda are hunted by his brother Denahi.

The moose brothers are the Tricksters, since they're the main source for comic relief.

Denahi is a Trickster, a Shapeshifter, and a Shadow. In the beginning of the movie, he's mischievous, and makes fun of Kenai on several occasions. However, after Sitka dies, and after he transforms Kenai, Denahi thinks he's the only brother left. From that moment on until the climax, Denahi's attitude changes drastically. He becomes serious and aggressive. Eventually, he lets his beard grow, which adds to his transformation. Since he's trying to kill Kenai at this point, he seems to be playing the role of the villain (therefore the Shadow) more than any other. This extreme transformation he goes through (his new attitude and look) makes him scarier for the main characters as well, feeling to the audience like an evil presence, granting the role of the Shadow during that time in the story.

In this subchapter, the most important interactions (which are the ones with the stronger role in the evolution of the narrative and the characters) were each looked at, together with the events (and other consequences) they triggered. The archetypes of most of the main characters were discussed, special attention being paid to the switching of masks, triggered by the events discussed above. The most extreme change in terms of archetypes is Denahi's case, who is a Trickster, a Shapeshifter, and a Shadow. There are a few mentors, even if some of them being so very briefly.

This movie can be seen as a strong example of conflicting relationships between non-antagonistic characters driving the narrative, to the point of one of them briefly becoming the villain, which shows how versatile a plot like this can be, without the need of a character playing the villain one hundred percent of the time. Additionally, their interactions with each other influence the choices that they'll make. Finding the archetypes helps to clear up the doubts of what is the function of a certain character at a certain moment in the narrative. Those revealed functions allow the reader to understand how each character has the influence he/she has, in the narrative and the other characters, and why.

2.4.3. *All Dogs Go To Heaven*



Fig. 2.14. Charlie (center) and Itchy (left) reading a story to Anne-Marie (right)

In *All Dogs Go To Heaven* (Bluth, 1989), there are three main characters: Charlie, Itchy, and Anne-Marie. Despite the theme of this dissertation focusing on relationships between two non-antagonistic characters, this film provides an example of how a third member (Anne-Marie) can influence both the narrative conflict and the relationship between the other two characters (Charlie and Itchy).

Charlie B. Barkin is a rebel street dog who enjoys gambling, and is the co-owner of a casino, which is frequented by other street dogs. Prior to the events of the movie, Charlie had been sent to the city pound, and in the first scene, his associate and loyal friend, Itchy Itchiford, is digging a tunnel to help him escape. He mistakes a water pipe for a regular one, even though Charlie tries to warn him, and when he drills through it, he accidentally causes a flood in the pound, alerting the guards. They both exit the tunnel and try to run away from the guards, while avoiding to be hit by their gun shots. Their escape is made more difficult and less smooth because of Itchy, who besides expressing the need to gather all his tools before they leave, his nervousness causes him to scratch himself compulsively, thus being forced to stop along the way. In these first minutes of the movie, it's possible to see the kind of relationship Charlie and Itchy have: they are partners and help each other, but some traits about Itchy are able to become a liability during one of their schemes. Charlie several times expresses how he would prefer to work alone. He is usually the brain during their schemes, and Itchy occasionally calls him "boss"—a sign of his loyalty towards him.

Charlie runs the casino together with a pit-bull named Carface, sharing the establishment's profits by 50/50. Carface, unbeknownst to Charlie, is the one responsible for framing him and sending him to the pound, for the reason of wanting to keep all the casino's profits to himself. He organizes a welcoming party for Charlie as a way to trick him and murder him. He succeeds at his plan, and Charlie, while in Heaven, realizing what has happened, swears revenge on Carface. He manages to return to Earth, and goes to see his friend Itchy, who had witnessed his murder. Charlie finally convinces him he is alive, not a ghost, and starts to plot against Carface, to get back at him. Itchy however, thinks it's a bad idea, and advises Charlie for both of them to start over far away, without the fear of Carface finding out his plan has failed. (Itchy has seen what Carface is capable of, and is afraid of what else he might do to them.) Charlie doesn't listen to him, being committed to make Carface "beg for mercy". Itchy

tries to make Charlie realize how dangerous Carface is: he mentions his thugs and weaponry, and a “monster” he keeps in the casino’s basement. Charlie however, merely sees that as something he can use for his revenge, and the two of them, with Itchy reluctantly following, go spy on Carface to find the monster, and gain control over it. (Here, the narrative is being taken to a new and important part of the story, thanks to the interaction between the two characters, a fact which is further looked at below.)

Charlie and Itchy soon discover the so-called monster is an orphan young girl, who Carface keeps locked up. She has a gift that allows her to communicate with all animals, so he uses her to acquire information from the race rats to know which will win the next race. (The casino occasionally runs rat races, similar to horse races, on which the customers bet.) With that information, Carface places his bets, which allows him to acquire more money. Charlie decides to steal her away from him, and use her for the same purposes. When she tells him she doesn’t have parents, it further encourages Charlie. Itchy persists on trying to stop him, but he continues to ignore him. Anne-Marie believes she’s being rescued, but later on, in a local horse race, as Charlie asks her to find out which horse will win, she realizes he’s not different than Carface. She changes her mind however, when Charlie lies to her, by saying he promises to use the money to help the poor, and that once they have enough, he’ll help her find parents, which is her biggest wish, as she had expressed the previous night. In order to be able to make their first bet, they steal a wallet from a human couple, who Anne-Marie believes are perfect to be her new parents. She’s unaware of the wallet theft at that point. Charlie then takes her away, which causes her to lose her chance to try to be adopted by the couple.

Charlie, Itchy and Anne-Marie, all three disguised as a human wearing an overcoat, with a hat and a mustache, continue to bet on several animal races throughout the city. Itchy knows it’s a bad idea, and is several times annoyed by Charlie’s schemes with Anne-Marie, occasionally mocking them and making petty remarks. As the three spend more time together, Charlie begins to care more about Anne-Marie: while still pursuing his own goals, he does take some time to buy her clothes.

Eventually, with the money they’ve won from the bets, Charlie and Itchy build a new casino, which inevitably makes Charlie’s presence in town more noticeable. As Itchy was predicting from the start, Carface finds out Charlie is alive. He connects the pieces and figures out he’s the one who stole Anne-Marie from him, and sets off to get her back by force.

Meanwhile, while visiting a family of puppies in an old abandoned church, Anne-Marie finds the wallet Charlie stole and recognizes the picture of the couple she had met. She’s hurt by what he has done, and the next day, without him knowing, goes look for the address in the wallet. She successfully finds the couple’s house, Harold and Kate, and they let her eat breakfast with them. She eventually tells them she’s a homeless orphan and the couple, concerned about her, start thinking about letting her live with them. Charlie however, had asked one of the puppies where she had gone to, and finds the place. While Harold and Kate talk in private, he convinces Anne-Marie to go with him. As he successfully tries to

manipulate her, he tells her he's happy she found a home and a family, and declines her invitation to come live with them, because he doesn't want to "spoil it for her". He bids her farewell, and makes a fake coughing as he walks away. Feeling sorry for Charlie, Anne-Marie follows him.

Along the way, Charlie and Anne-Marie are chased by Carface. They manage to hide from him, but Anne-Marie eventually becomes ill, and Charlie takes her back to the old church where the puppies and their mother live.

Carface and his thugs enter Charlie's casino and interrogate Itchy about the girl. They leave him severely injured, and burn the casino to the ground. Itchy goes to the church to talk to Charlie, while Anne-Marie is being looked after by the puppies and their mother. Itchy, covered in bruises, and walking with a limp, tells Charlie what happened. At first, he sounds angry and speaks sarcastically, but slowly, his fragility and his fear start coming to the surface. He explains to Charlie how he had been trying to tell him he shouldn't have wanted revenge, and that they should have gone far away and never let Carface know he had survived. He explains to him how he tried to tell him it was a bad idea to take Anne-Marie from Carface, because he knew he would go after them; the consequences now being clearly seen, as he tried to kill Itchy. Finally, he tells Charlie that the reason he stayed with him and put up with Anne-Marie and all of his schemes was because Charlie is his best friend. (Here is presented a clear sign of how the relationship between the two dogs plays an important role in the narrative.) Charlie feels sorry for what happened, and tries to calm Itchy down. He tells him that they will start over and keep using Anne-Marie's gift to win back the money. But Itchy sees Charlie is merely saying that because he has developed affection towards her, and will probably let her go. Charlie lies, angrily denying his feelings. He assures Itchy that he's his best friend and not Anne-Marie, and that he's only using her. But without them realizing earlier, she overhears the conversation, and runs off crying. Charlie tries to catch on her to apologize, but Carface has kidnapped her before he could reach her.

Charlie goes to Carface's casino (his old one) to rescue Anne-Marie. After a long and aggressive fight between him and Carface and his thugs, the place burns down and water floods in. While trying to save Anne-Marie both from drowning and the fire, Charlie manages to get her to safety, but eventually drowns. The girl is saved by the street dogs and the wallet couple, thanks to Itchy, who had come to call everyone. Charlie comes back later that night, in ghost form, to say goodbye to Anne-Marie, who is now living with the couple: her wish has been granted. Itchy is sleeping next to her. Charlie gives his good-bye to Anne-Marie, saying it's not forever, and asks her to take care of Itchy, since he's now alone. She tells Charlie she loves him, and he reluctantly tells her the same. Charlie then gets taken to Heaven, having had earned his place there for sacrificing himself to save Anne-Marie.

With the description of the movie's plot complete, with some examination made about this theme's characteristics as well, it's possible to conclude that the scenario in this relationship between three characters is as follows: A (Charlie) and B (Itchy) have a somewhat steady

partnership. They knowing how to get along, despite their differences (and B's irritating quirks), it's a strong foundation in their relationship. (It's very different than the one Charlie used to have with Carface, as the latter, wanting to keep all the profits, sent the former to the dog pound and, when it failed, he tried to murder him.)

One possible example for a scenario within the matter (two partner characters with an added third one) could be, for instance: A and B have a functional partnership, and then one day they meet C, who joins them. C criticizes B, and A either defends B, or sides with C. A's choice will determine his relationships with both B and C. If he chooses to side with C, B will feel hurt; maybe not at first, but after some time and more similar situations.

Another example could be: A and B have a conflicting partnership, almost never agreeing with each other, but as soon as C is introduced, it starts helping them both solve their differences in opinions and ways of working. A, for instance, doesn't like the changes C has brought to his relationship with B. Despite C having made their work in fact more effective, he feels he's losing some advantages he would prefer to be able to keep (*Compromise*, according to Hartzell). B doesn't mind giving up something in order for them to reach a solution in their conflicts in opinions, but because A begins insisting on how he doesn't like it, the more becomes apparent something needs to change. C then helps them find a way to *collaborate* with each other in a way that all three are happy.

There can come many scenarios from such relationships (two characters who are partners, and a third one that comes later and changes things), and the consequences can be different than the one explained above.

During the moment in the film just after Itchy discovers his friend is alive, the interaction between the two characters, which happen to be experiencing a difference in opinions, allows the narrative to move forward to an important point in the story: they meeting Anne-Marie, the third main character. Additionally, in that conversation, Itchy, rather than using the methods of *Avoidance* and *Accommodation* in his argument with Charlie, he's actually trying to convince Charlie to do it himself: to *avoid* conflict with Carface (revenge), and to *accommodate* to Itchy's safer plan (hiding and starting over); which is an interesting twist in conflict solving methods. This scene contains at least two forms of conflict, one being the two characters having different opinions, and the other being the situation of Charlie needing to hide from the villain. The one form of conflict that helps the plot advance is the difference in opinions from the two main characters. Itchy tries to warn Charlie about the danger, but the latter simply becomes more devoted to his own revenge plan, which involves going in the direction of the trouble by stealing the villain's asset. Charlie's recklessness, contrasted and made more obvious by Itchy's somewhat wisdom, helps taking the characters to the next level. It's worth pointing out that this disagreement is taking the characters in the direction of a very important part of the story, rather than a minor stage in the plot which role is mainly to lead to another one more important than that, such as when they arrive at the casino in the beginning, which anticipates the moment Charlie is murdered. This disagreement is allowing

the characters to move to the point in the story where they meet Anne-Marie, which brings a new source of influence to the characters.

Charlie and Itchy influence each other in some way or another during the course of the film, and that relationship between them both has an influence on both the unfolding of the narrative and the directions it takes (as seen above), as well as on the evolution of them both through their journey. Anne-Marie also has an influence on the narrative and the evolution of both Charlie and Itchy, but she doesn't show much evolution through the course of the movie. She has something she wishes to see fulfilled, which is to have a family, and that wish of hers is eventually granted, mostly thanks to her own actions. Despite that however, below, it's discussed how each character helps the other evolve through the narrative. (Carface, of course, being the villain, has a very strong influence in the narrative and the character's actions. However, he'll be only very briefly mentioned, due to the villain not being a central part of this study's theme.)

Charlie starts the movie as a selfish and manipulative character. He keeps Itchy around, but it's mostly because it suits him to have someone who admires him close by, to follow his orders and help him in any of his many schemes. However, as he spends more time with Anne-Marie (who is a child filled with love and innocence), listening to her, keeping her safe, he starts to genuinely care for her. He becomes more selfless and compassionate, to the point of giving his life to save her. Additionally, as the situation around the three main characters becomes worse, with Itchy almost being killed, Charlie becomes aware of how much Itchy cares about him, and therefore realizes how important someone like Itchy is for him. Out of this new compassion he got from the experience, Charlie is more concerned about Itchy's well-being, and because of that, not being able to be with him anymore, he asks Anne-Marie to take good care of him.

Itchy is very loyal to Charlie, even when he believes Charlie is risking himself too much and about to get them both in trouble with his ideas. He frequently tries to warn him, but to no avail. Itchy's loyalty towards Charlie remains present through the movie, but when the thing he feared would happen to them actually happens, he doesn't try to sugar coat it for Charlie. On the contrary, Itchy speaks his mind in a very angry but sincere way, even confessing to Charlie that he remains loyal to him because of what their friendship means to him. At that point, Charlie can't help but understand Itchy's point of view, especially after seeing his friend injured, and it being his own fault. Near the end of the movie, Itchy has called all the dogs from the city to come help Charlie and Anne-Marie. (Help Charlie because he's his best friend, and help Anne-Marie because she's important to Charlie.) At the end, Itchy has become Anne-Marie's pet. She's the only remaining friend he has, and vice-versa. He never really considers her an enemy in the first place, although he does consider her dangerous (because of what Carface is capable of doing if he finds the three of them). Although, gradually, he grows fond of her as well, and since Carface dies as well at the end, it's no longer dangerous to be with her.

Through the film, Charlie seems to see Itchy more as an assistant than as a friend, keeping a close relationship mostly with Anne-Marie throughout the story. It's especially after Itchy is almost killed that Charlie shows how much he wishes to be a good friend for him as well, even trying to convince Itchy that he doesn't care about Anne-Marie at all, which is not only false, but also a wrong way of trying to keep an alliance strong. By the end of the movie though, all three are close friends.

In this subchapter, the discussed subjects were a movie that revolves around three non-antagonistic characters, and the ways the interactions between them influence each other up until the end of the narrative, at least one of them (Charlie) going through a clear transformation.

Seeing as the film presents two of the main characters (Charlie and Itchy) as having a slightly conflicting but stable relationship, it's also shown how it becomes more conflicting (how both their points of view become severely diverging) when a third character (Anne-Marie) is added to the story, and it's shown to what consequences that leads (Carface eventually finds out about them, destroys their casino and kidnaps Anne-Marie again), as well as the consequences after those first ones are resolved (Charlie and Carface die, Anne-Marie is adopted, and Itchy goes to live with her).

In addition, from this story a template for other scenarios is visualized, in which the story starts with a certain kind of relationship between two main characters, and changes drastically thanks to a third character interacting closely with the first two.

Some forms of conflict resolving, according to Hartzell, are applied both to the movie and to the speculation of other scenarios with similar relationships.

2.4.4. *Shrek*



Fig. 2.15. *Shrek* (left) and *Donkey* (right)

Shrek, the protagonist in the movie of the same name, *Shrek* (Adamson, 2001), is an ogre who likes to spend his days relaxing in his swamp, scaring away everyone who comes near. The main reason for that is because most people, who are from a village nearby, see Shrek as a threat to their safety, and often try to kill him or force him to leave.

One day, a talking donkey, named Donkey, is running away from a group of men who want to buy him from his previous owner. As Shrek hangs up a new warning sign on a tree's trunk, Donkey finds him. Not particularly interested in protecting the donkey from the men, he scares them away, mainly because it's what he usually does. He ignores Donkey and walks back home. But Donkey is thankful to him for what he did, and wants to be his friend, so he keeps following him. And since he's a talking donkey, who has the characteristic of really liking to do so, he represents a significant cause for Shrek's irritation. He frequently attempts to make him leave, but quickly realizes Donkey is determined to stick with him. This encounter between the two characters results in Shrek losing the peaceful solitude he used to have.

Shortly after ordering Donkey to sleep outside, Shrek finds his house and swamp filled with dozens of Fairy Tale Creatures, a group which Donkey previously belonged to. Shrek finds out he needs to go talk to the land's ruler, and since Donkey is the only one willing to take him where he is, he reluctantly accepts his company. He then begins a journey, with Donkey still by his side, in an attempt to bring his life back to the previous privacy-filled state.

The character of Donkey was created with the function to help Shrek, the hero, bring out his more playful nature, as well as to help him learn to trust and enjoy the company of others. His continuing insistence in being friends with Shrek, as well as Shrek's continuing insistence in pushing him away, causes the ogre to end up telling Donkey about how he believes he doesn't need friends, and that he prefers to be left alone, on account that every person he has encountered is either scared of him or wants to kill him. As Shrek confesses those things, Donkey confesses him he didn't judge him in any way when they met, trying to show him it's possible for him to have friends. Shrek begins to question his own beliefs, both because of Donkey, and because at the same time, he's gradually falling in love with the princess they've rescued. Eventually, he will have to deal with that fact, especially when he fears he's about to lose her. In a climactic moment, Donkey arrives and confronts him about the need to have friends, and provides him the necessary assistance for him to go confess the princess his feelings for her. At the end of the movie, Shrek has become more social and outgoing, and has gained both a friend and a wife.

In several moments of the movie, Shrek is in conflict either with himself, his situation, or with another character. Every time Donkey is pestering him, either by constantly talking or never leaving his side, Shrek is in conflict with him. He's simultaneously in conflict with the situation of having an unwanted guest. When the two characters argue about Shrek's lack of trust in people, they're in conflict with each other. When Shrek sees the woman he loves is going to marry someone else, he's in conflict both with that situation and himself, because he thinks he either needs to be able to get back to his previous life, or, as soon as Donkey confronts him and tells him he knows the princess loves him too, he needs to make the decision to stop the wedding and ask her to marry him instead.

As it's been discussed in Chapter 2, Donkey's character represents the archetypes of Trickster and Mentor. He may probably be understood as well as a Threshold Guardian, since he's

keeping Shrek from continuing on his initial life-style by taking away his privacy. He has no intention of doing so to Shrek however, as what he himself mainly wants is a friend. (Other Threshold Guardians who are also allies to the hero will be looked at in this study, those being the green creature in *The Hardest Jigsaw*, and the owl in this Master's Degree's final project, *A Helping Hoot*.)

It's possible to assume that as a character, Shrek, in the beginning of the story, is already essentially complete, happily living his comfortable and quiet life in the swamp. As soon as Donkey enters his life, closely followed by the Fairy Tale Creatures being left in his swamp, that peace he fought so passionately to keep is suddenly taken away. That loss is what sets his quest in motion—Hero's Lack (Vogler, 1998, p. 90). Throughout said quest, by spending time with other characters (Donkey, his guide to the ruler's town, and the princess he has been assigned to rescue), he soon realizes that the privacy he had is not as important as he initially thought. By the end, he has gained something far greater and more valuable than what he had before.

In this subchapter, the influences a character (Donkey) has on another (Shrek), the conflicts that come from those interactions and its following consequences are looked at. Shrek changes his life completely, mostly thanks to Donkey, who was made by the crew with that function in mind.

2.4.5. Tom and Jerry: The Movie



Fig. 2.16. Tom (right) and Jerry (left), as seen in their movie

Tom and Jerry is a popular series of seven-minute animated shorts created by William Hanna and Joseph Barbera in 1940. The series revolves around a cat named Tom and a mouse named Jerry, often chasing and battling each other, with the common occurrence of slapstick comedy. The conflict between the two characters is basically the narrative conflict of the shorts.

Tom is a gray cat who enjoys sleeping and eating: basically the usual activities of a regular domestic cat. At times however, he also engages in some activities proper of humans, such as giving a piano recital in an auditorium, as seen in the *The Cat Concerto* (Hanna & Barbera, 1947) (which won the 1946 Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film), or being the

teacher of a younger cat, as seen in *Professor Tom* (Hanna & Barbera, 1948). This implies that the character can be portrayed in several different ways depending on the short. Despite this fact, he sticks to the role of a regular domestic cat for most of the shorts: trying to stop Jerry from succeeding at having his way and thus invading Tom's territory.

Jerry is a mouse who in the beginning of the shorts is often times seen living in a wide variety of places that are somewhere near Tom, including in the same piano he's playing in *The Cat Concerto*, being usually in this fashion that the two find each other. Jerry enjoys cheese, as it's a common trait in cartoon mice. He often engages in mischief against Tom, such as stealing food, or pestering him in his activities, like standing in front of him while he plays the piano and waving his finger to the sound of Tom's music, as seen in *The Cat Concerto*, or as a way of revenge for Tom's own mischief against him.

In the shorts, it varies which of the two is the first to cause the feud to start. There can be times where, even though Tom is the antagonist for the most part, it's Jerry who takes the role. In *The Million Dollar Cat* (Hanna & Barbera, 1944), Tom inherits one million dollars, and can only keep them on the condition that he won't harm any living thing, even a mouse, as the telegram clearly states. Jerry, aware of the deal, spends most of the short taking advantage of Tom, either for revenge for what he usually does to him, or as yet another chance to have fun. To Tom's own frustration, he can't do anything to stop Jerry.

Their home doesn't appear to be defined, as both the house and owners vary between eras. Tom's first owner is a black woman, which generated controversy, and thus got several times redubbed (for a less stereotypical accent), and replaced by a thinner white woman in some shorts. In the following eras, this black owner was no longer featured, but instead a white woman, or a white couple. What is a clearer almost-constant in the shorts is that the two characters are brought together, either by coincidence (with one finding the other casually while on a normal activity), or when Jerry tries to get food from the kitchen, or when one of them wants to have fun at the expense of the other; and thus a chase and/or a battle ensues.

A cat chasing a mouse is a classic cartoon gag, made famous by Tom and Jerry, two of the most iconic characters in animation. They are an accurate example of two opposite characters, whose contrasting differences are made very clear, since they're a cat and a mouse, two animals very likely to spend their lives keeping the mentality of not belonging together.

Tom and Jerry: The Movie (Roman, 1992) is a buddy film. In the beginning of the narrative, Tom's family is about to move to a new home. Their house is the last one of the area, as it's filled with tall buildings. The two characters begin to chase each other (with the usual trigger of one doing something mischievous to the other), and Tom misses the opportunity to be in the car when they're leaving. In the next morning, the house is demolished, and both Tom and Jerry start wandering through town looking for food and shelter. Jerry follows Tom, who instead wants him to leave him alone. While they've been mute until this point in the picture, communicating through gestures, body language and facial expressions (as it's common in their classic shorts), the story shifts and they both start talking, with full dialogue. In that moment, both characters express how they can't stand each other.

For a few moments in the film, the audience is shown a familiar Tom and Jerry setting: the same slapstick comedy from the classic shorts is seen both in the opening credits sequence, and in the first and last scenes of the film. In the remaining time however, the focus of the narrative changes drastically, to one that does not concern the characters directly. Tom and Jerry meet a young girl, named Robyn Starling, without a mother, and whose father is, at first, presumed to be dead. She's being taken care of by an evil guardian named Aunt Figg, who, together with a lawyer named Lickboot, plot to hide the truth about Robyn's father being alive, in order to keep the Starlings' money. Tom and Jerry eventually find out about their plan, and proceed to reach Robyn and give her the news. With that, the three run away together to look for her father.

In the classic shorts, usually either Tom or Jerry do something somewhat harmful to the other. The victim (until then enjoying a peaceful time, with himself or with friends) decides to get even with him. The process keeps going back-and-forth until the end, with one of them coming out victorious. The battles between the two are the main focus of the shorts (in other words, the narrative conflict), but in the movie, Tom and Jerry keep themselves from fighting most of the time. Their antics against each other during the narrative conflict, which is centered on Robyn instead of them, are thus reduced to comic relief. Both characters occasionally prank each other, but in a very brief way, with no followed consequence of one expressing desire to getting back at the other, the reason for it probably being to not take the focus away from the narrative conflict.

Considering Tom and Jerry's origins, if a movie about the duo involves them trying to become friends (hence a buddy movie, as this one is), it's expected for their journey of pursuing that goal to be the main focal point of the narrative (or at least one of the main ones), and being what makes it advance, which does not happen in this movie. Instead of driving the plot, the dynamic of the cat-and-mouse relationship is moved to the side. Tom and Jerry ideally would find themselves in a situation where they realize fighting each other has become pointless (similar to *The Truce Hurts* (Hanna & Barbera, 1948)), and during the movie they would gain a better understanding of friendship and partnership, and respect each other more. In the film, they in fact find each other in such situations. However, this conflict between the two characters lasts for approximately 15 minutes, until Robyn's character is introduced.

Tom and Jerry do in fact become friends in the movie. A few minutes before they meet Robyn, Jerry helps Tom escape a group of antagonistic alley cats. They begin to take care of each other, encourage each other and working together to help Robyn in her quest. Close to the end, in a climactic moment, a wooden house burns to the ground, with Tom and Jerry up on the roof. They both survive the fall, but before Tom finds Jerry, he starts looking for him, fearing the death of his friend. Throughout the film, they are shown to be quite able to act as partners. Being Tom and Jerry, however, they take every opportunity to playfully hurt each other and get in the other's way as a form of prank. Because they don't display real evolution from the beginning of the picture to the end, as soon as Robyn's story is fully told, the last minute is spent with Tom and Jerry returning to exactly what they're known for doing in the classic shorts: tricking and hurting each other, and playing chase around the house, leaving it

wrecked in the process. While it's clear that they care for each other to a certain degree, their continuing wish to make each other's lives more difficult remains quite pronounced.

The concept of a buddy movie — stories that “focus on the strengths and contrasts of the characters to overcome adversity and become friends” (Sullivan, Schumer, & Alexander, 2008, p. 19) — is an unusual one for these two characters, due to what the classic shorts are known for. While Tom doesn't always express the feeling of wanting to eat Jerry, they are in fact naturally meant to be antagonistic to one another. This is clearly noticeable by the fact that both characters show no evolution throughout the film, as their relationship remains intact in both the very beginning and the very ending. In the middle of it, Robyn is the lead character, and Tom and Jerry are the supporting ones. Therefore, it's easy to see this as a movie able to stand by itself without the need for the iconic duo's presence. It has them in nonetheless, for the sole purpose of attracting a larger audience.

It's worth pointing out that: In the shorts Tom and Jerry hang out with only other animal characters, and the humans solely play the owners. In this film, Robyn, Aunt Figg and Lickboot (three of the main character), are humans. That, together with giving Tom and Jerry full dialogue, is a switch for the characters into a world shared by humans and speaking anthropomorphic animals. That element comes off as strange, and makes Tom and Jerry look out-of-place. This story is severely missing both an important connection to their original universe, and a proper presentation of character and relationship evolution.

This film presents an incorrect handling of the concept behind a narrative focused on the relationship between two non-antagonistic characters with contrasting traits. Instead of exploring it further, accompanying the stages both characters go through in their journey, and eventually learning more about each other and gaining mutual respect, this movie inserts Tom and Jerry in situations where they barely act like their usual selves, for the sole purpose of taking part in a young girl's own narrative. The most serious aspect of it might be its sudden introduction, which is set right in the middle of the second act. Before the moment Robyn is first shown, the plot was only focusing on Tom and Jerry in the city looking for a home and trying to learn how to be friends. That quest of theirs becomes the secondary focal point; switching Robyn's to be the main conflict from that moment on. Hooks (2011) talks about “the willing suspension of disbelief” (p. 65): In either a play or a movie, the first scene should tell the audience the rules of the story about to be told. *Pinocchio* (Roberts, 1940) is a very clear example. It starts with Jiminy Cricket turning to the audience, as if it was a real play. He opens a storybook, larger than himself, and begins to tell the story of Pinocchio, as a form of introducing the movie itself. Right in the beginning, the audience is subtly explained that in the world within the movie, crickets can talk and read. The audience now knows that it's a fantasy world, where magical things can happen; and will continue to believe it so, without being caught unprepared when a fairy appears and gives life to a wooden puppet. The audience, even then, will keep their “willing suspension of disbelief”, and will follow the characters wherever they go, and be more able to feel what they feel. *Tom and Jerry: The Movie*, on the contrary, starts with an opening sequence with Tom and Jerry displaying their classic antics, all the time without talking. The audience knows, or thinks they know, what

kind of movie to expect. It continues on in an expected way, still within the boundaries already established: Tom's owner calls him to the car, and Jerry gets in Tom's way, causing him to miss it. But later on, dialogue between the characters is suddenly introduced, along with a human girl who is hiding from her evil guardian, Aunt Figg. The audience is now seeing a different movie.

(Tom and Jerry find a human girl hiding from someone, and go talk to her, not thinking there can be anything stopping them from doing so, such as species and language differences. She does not find it strange either, to find a cat and a mouse who can speak to her like ordinary people. Tom and Jerry were both amazed at hearing each other talk, but not being so for being able to do the same with a human can be considered an error in writing. This case is unlike Anne-Marie's, in *All Dogs Go To Heaven*. Even though she can communicate with animals and vice-versa, Charlie and Itchy are amazed by it, making it clear to the audience that she can do so because she has a gift.)

This plot not only doesn't match the ones Tom and Jerry are known to be in, but it takes place in a world where children can talk to house pets and other small critters. That connection allows for Robyn's concerns to be Tom and Jerry's as well, as they are now less animal and more human, and thus more empathetic towards Robyn. Such a characteristic is unique among the Tom and Jerry shorts, placing the duo in a universe different of their own.

In this subchapter, both the classic Tom and Jerry shorts and the 1992 animated movie were looked at. The points that were emphasized were the following:

Tom and Jerry are known for being natural enemies, and in this movie, by becoming homeless overnight, and realizing they're each other's only company left, they are forced to help each other and try to become friends. They are two contrasting characters, and non-antagonistic ones for most of the time in the film. However, instead of allowing the conflicting relationship between them to have an important role in the unfolding of the narrative, it's moved to the side, to serve the purpose of comic relief, while another story occurs. They are therefore given the sole role of Tricksters throughout the movie. (They are in fact Tricksters already in their classic shorts, but for a movie with this kind of story, they should be more close to Trickster-Heroes than they actually are.)

Robyn Starling is the character that has the biggest influence in the narrative, which goes against, not only what the movie is supposed to be about, but also against the rules established by the classic shorts and the beginning of the film. Tom and Jerry's role is to help Robyn in her adventure while she tries to find her father, all the while being chased by the greedy guardian and lawyer. If Robyn's father, who is presumed to be dead, returns, the guardian's services will no longer be required, and she'll no longer have her family's money, so she tries to recapture her and keep her and everyone else from ever knowing that her father is still alive.

This story does not need Tom and Jerry to be in it, therefore being an independent narrative that includes them probably only to attract more viewers.

2.5. Conclusions, and what follows in the next chapter

In this chapter, the subjects around the theme of the research, regarding the history and technology, the theory and the state of the art, were looked at.

Due to the growing need for both good role-models, and Disney sending a positive message about themselves to the world, Animation gradually became a source of entertainment especially with children and families in mind. Mickey Mouse was one of the first characters to be toned down to fit those needs.

Characters became more complex over time, a clear example of that tendency being Batman. In the 60s television series, he doesn't seem to have internal conflicts, which clearly contrasts with the one portrayed in Nolan's movies. In those, the character of Bruce Wayne deals with inner fears and a painful sense of duty towards protecting his city.

Relationships between characters became more complex as well, as it was possible to verify through the evolution of the animated series *My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic*.

In *The Adventures of Tintin: The Secret of the Unicorn* (Spielberg, 2011), it was possible to apply all of the discussed changes discussed in the previous three examples. The classic stories of Tintin and Captain Haddock were translated to a movie for today's audience, presenting a growing in complexity of both the characters and their relationships, and a particular attention given to provide a message against the exaggerated consumption of alcohol.

De Dreu & Weingart (2003), with the task and relationship conflicts, and Hartzell (n.d.), with the Avoidance, Accommodation, Competition, Compromise, and Collaboration, contained useful information about negotiation and conflict management.

Thomas & Johnston (1981), Hooks (2011), Vogler (1998), and Seger (1990) provided a considerable amount of basis for storytelling and characters required to address the subjects dealt within this dissertation.

The varied forms of conflict, its causes, the ways of solving them and its consequences, both in the two main characters and the narrative they're a part of, were discussed.

There can be conflict between two characters even if they are not enemies. That same conflict can come from something small like a difference in opinions, and is still able to carry on to the point of there being real tension between the two characters, which can then have an influence on the story itself and on the characters, causing them to evolve and learn something from the conflict after it's solved.

By looking at some stages in the Hero's Journey, the characters in a narrative as functions and its correspondent archetypes, it was concluded that it's possible to take the basis for storytelling (discovered by Joseph Campbell and Carl Jung, and translated into the audio-

visual by Christopher Vogler (1998)) and use it to help support the fundamentals of this research's theme. Two non-antagonistic contrasting characters carry their own functions in the narrative, and have a role in each other's life and journey, whether they're Heroes, Tricksters, Mentors, Shadows or Threshold Guardians.

Toy Story (Lasseter, 1995), *Shrek* (Adamson, 2001), *The Adventures of Tintin: The Secret of the Unicorn* (Spielberg, 2011), *My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic*, *All Dogs Go To Heaven* (Bluth, 1989), *Brother Bear* (Blaise, 2003), *Sleeping Beauty* (Geronimi, 1958), and *The Hardest Jigsaw* (Anderson, 2010) provided fundamental artistic models for guidance in presenting the theme of the dissertation throughout its pages. In the case of *Tom and Jerry: The Movie* (Roman, 1992), the movie allowed to present how such a relationship between two non-antagonistic characters didn't necessarily play a significant role in the narrative.

By telling a story, the storyteller (whether being one person, a group, or an entire crew behind a movie or television series) causes the people receiving it to hopefully form some type of emotional connection with it. Because of that, they will probably apply the journey of the protagonist (the hero) to their own lives, thus somehow helping them overcome their own similar problems. In the case of those problems being related to this study's theme, upon receiving the story, the viewers may learn how to deal with a difficult person, whose way of thinking or working is frustrating, or whose opinions and points of view are several times contrary to their own, whether that person is a colleague at work or a close relative. Wellins remarks storytelling as being one of the earliest forms of teaching (p. 26); which is true, both in the history of men, and the way children learn lessons about life while still at a very young age.

After the close examination of the artistic works, and the acknowledgements made from the Historical-Technological and Theoretic contexts, this study is ready to advance towards the case study with this Master's Degree's final project, *A Helping Hoot*, an animated short film with a narrative mainly driven by the relationship between the two characters. Upon its thorough examination, the main question of this dissertation will be closer to being answered.

3. A Case Study with *A Helping Hoot*



Fig. 3.1. Still from the produced short film

A Helping Hoot is the short film produced for this Master's Degree's discipline "Final Project". It's a short animation, aimed at people of all ages, and it has the running time of five-and-a-half minutes.

In this case study, the major aspects looked at in Chapter 2 are applied to the present short film, in order for this study to be fully able to show how the conflict between two non-antagonistic characters can have a strong influence on the narrative. The man and the owl, apart from the crowd voices near the end, are the only characters in this short film, a fact which serves to show how simple a story of this type can be, while still delivering a strong and universal message, something the author wished to send to the audience, and that could possibly teach them something simple yet important about life. The message is the following: what someone is looking for may be closer than he thinks, and the help may come from even who he least expects.

3.1. Synopsis

During a camping trip, a man, who is usually in a happy mood, offers to go gather firewood for the campfire later at night. Soon, the night comes. The man already has all the necessary firewood, but he can't find the way back. That's the moment in which this short film begins.

The man keeps walking around the deep woods, gradually becoming more tired, frustrated and angrier. He consults his map and takes a look at his surroundings, but it's revealed to be of no use, since the twisting and crossing lines on the map only make it more confusing for the man to be able to tell where he is. He trips over two tree roots, one after the other, which causes him to drop the firewood. However, after getting up from the first fall and picking up the wood, he had turned the flashlight on, since it was already too dark for him to see properly. Therefore, tripping over the second root was solely out of momentary distraction, caused by his ever-growing frustration and tiredness. He points the flashlight upwards as a way to look at it as he acknowledges his mistake: tripping over a root because of the lack of light is understandable, but tripping over another one even after being able to see sounds like

an embarrassing detail, which he'll prefer to leave out once he's back and tells the story to his friends.

As he points the flashlight upwards, unbeknownst to him, he points it at an owl that was sleeping in his home, a hole in a tree. This owl wakes up, walks over to the side, and takes a look at the new presence that has interrupted his sleep. After a few seconds, the man continues to walk, still frustrated and tired, and doesn't pick the firewood back up. The owl returns to his home, and tries to resume his sleeping and forget about what happened.

The man arrives at a point in his path where he may choose one of three. He tries again to find directions through the map, but it still looks unclear to him. Out of anger, he throws the map away. As he does so, a sudden wind gust in his direction causes the map to instantly come back to him, hitting him in the face. Furious, he starts cursing out loud, which difficult the owl's attempt to fall back asleep. Irritated, he flies off and lands on a branch near the man. He observes him for a few seconds, trying to comprehend his situation. As he does so, from the corner of his eyes, he notices another thing, in the near distance: several tents together in an open area of the forest, located just across a thick wall of trees. He reflects for a few more seconds, and concludes that the man must be lost and trying to find his point of origin, which the owl presumes to be the open area where the tents are. One of his indications is the fact that both the man and the camp possess devices capable of producing light. The man has a flashlight, and the camp has lamps scattered around. Having enough evidence, the owl decides that it's up to him to help the man return to his camp, so that he can stop complaining and allow him to go back to sleep.

The owl flies down to meet the man. His introductory "hoots" startle the man, but interrupt his angry muttering. The owl lands next to where he's sitting, and the man looks back at him, slightly nervous. He tries to show the man the location of the camp by pointing at it with both his rotating head and his pupils, but he doesn't understand. The owl then proceeds to a more drastic measure and pulls the man from his vest. The man becomes irritated by this, and moves his arm aggressively towards the owl to make him leave him alone. The man then resumes his muttering, and more objectively tries to figure out a way to find the way back. He consults his compass, thinks for a moment, and chooses one of the paths. Unfortunately for the owl, who is still watching him close by, the path the man has chosen goes exactly in the opposite direction. Still determined to help the man, however hard it may be, the owl goes after him. He starts angrily flying in front of the man, trying to make him understand he needs to walk towards the opposite direction. However, this is again misunderstood by the man, since he now thinks the owl is attacking him. As he backs away, he accidentally falls. He reaches out to the nearest object, his flashlight, and quickly points it at the owl, as a way to momentarily blind him. After being caught by the light, the owl flies upwards and stops in mid-air, preparing for a quick descent towards the man. He doesn't know what the owl is thinking about doing, but focuses his attention on him nonetheless, trying to be as prepared as possible for another possible attack. The owl begins his quick descent. The man tries to defend himself with the flashlight. But as the owl becomes closer, he flinches and tries to cover his face. The owl steals the man's hat, and continues to fly; now in the direction of the

wall of trees that separates them from the camp. Angry, the man follows the owl. Just when he gets closer to him, the owl flies into the wall. As the man forces his way in, he drops the flashlight. He yells and runs across the trees, and soon trips over a third root. He abruptly lands outside the wall, and exactly inside the camp he was trying to find. He's still furious with the owl and wants to find him so he can retrieve his hat, but when he finally notices where he is, he becomes speechless. He puts the pieces together and, just as he's concluding that the owl was trying to help him, his hat lands on top of his head. They look at each other in a friendly manner. The man feels embarrassed for misinterpreting the owl. He suddenly remembers something and returns to the area they were before. The owl finds that a strange and unexpected action from the man, but it becomes clear when the man returns. He's carrying with him the firewood and the flashlight, which he had dropped earlier. In addition, this time, he remembers to stop, think, and avoid tripping over the root. Noticeably in a happier mood than in the beginning of the story, he says goodbye to the owl and reunites with his friends. Satisfied, the owl returns to his home, knowing that now he'll be able to sleep properly. However, it's not very long before music and singing begins coming from inside the camp. Irritated and angry, the owl realizes it's not going to be easy to sleep that night. He breathes in, and releases a loud "hoot", as a way to either express his anger or to try to tell the people in the camp to lower down the music. That's the moment the short film ends.

3.2. The conflict and the relationship between characters

As it has already been said in the present study, the narrative conflict is the primary source of unbalance in the world in which the narrative takes place, and that unbalance is what has the strongest influence on the emotions and actions of the main characters. In this particular short film, it's possible to verify two narrative conflicts: the primary one, which is the man being lost, and the secondary one, which is the owl trying to help him. It's called a secondary narrative conflict because it's parallel to the primary one, and its solving allows the first to be solved as well.

Presented below are the poles of the conflict both characters face throughout the story.

In the man's first conflict, one pole is he wanting to leave the forest. The other pole, which stops the man from reaching his goal, is the fact that he's lost.

In his second conflict, one pole is the man still wanting to leave the forest, but now the other pole is the owl making that goal more difficult to reach (at least from his point of view).

In the owl's first conflict, one pole is he wanting to sleep. The other is the man making noise while walking through the woods.

In his second conflict, one pole is the owl wanting to help the man. The other pole is the man not understanding him.

Unlike the primary narrative conflict, during the secondary one, each character is the main source of unbalance for the other. By reacting to each other, there's a growing tension between both. The relationship between them plays a fundamental role in the narrative, since

each action chosen by either one of them has an influence on the mood of the other, as well as on the action he chooses to take in response.

While building this story, it was important to make sure that it continuously followed the rules about acting dictated by Hooks (2011). For example, a character “should play an action in pursuit of an objective while overcoming an obstacle” (pp. 18–19). In other words, any action the character takes should be one that will both take him to his goal and allow him to overcome a present difficulty—which would be either a conflict with himself, or with the situation, or with another character. Any kind of action not being in pursuit of said goal would not be theatrical reality, but regular, making it not necessary to be in the story. In addition to it, it was important to keep in mind that a character that has a goal to reach only changes the way to achieve it if something exterior happens that forces him to change direction (p. 23). That character may be a fisherman, pursuing the goal to catch a large fish, but if a nearby volcano starts erupting, he’ll know that his life is in danger, so he’ll want to run to a safer zone and leave the fishing for another time. His goal continues to be the same, but now the action in pursuit of that goal is for him to save his life in order to be able to reach his goal later.

Hooks also explains that it’s necessary to make sure each part of the action performed by any character corresponds to the previous one. In the short film, if one of the characters was furious in one moment, in the next one, his movement, attitude, and even rhythm, should be influenced by the feelings he would still be having. It wouldn’t make sense if an angry character became calm all of a sudden (p. 25). In this story, there needed to exist a constant and steady increase in the tension between the characters. In the beginning, they are frustrated and slightly irritated at each other. As the story progresses and the owl tries new and more invasive ways to communicate with the man, their levels of frustration and irritation increase, and the conflict between them becomes stronger. By the time the action reaches its climax, the highest point of tension, both characters come to the point of almost hurting each other, unintentionally, in the owl’s case. It’s very shortly afterwards that the resolution happens. If before that, there was a segment where the characters were suddenly calm again, or less angry, the steady growth of the tension would be interrupted, and the satisfaction felt by the audience when the resolution happened would be weak. Additionally, seeing as this was a short film, the story needed to be well delivered within the available time, hence the need for a steady increase in the tension.

3.3. The moments of conflict and its consequences

In his book, Vogler (1998) talks about the stages of the Hero’s Journey. One of the stages, “Tests, Allies, Enemies”, can be applied to the moments of conflict in this story. In that stage, the hero must pass tests in order to become stronger. Both the man and the owl can be seen as heroes. In this subchapter, the different moments of conflict in the story are examined, and with them, the various actions each character takes in response as ways of solving each test. Along with it, the consequences of each strategy are described. These observations will make

it possible to explore other ways the story could advance. Whenever appropriate, the archetypes (Vogler, 1998) and Hartzell's (n.d.) conflict management styles will be applied.

The first moment in which the two characters are in conflict with each other is when the man is unable to understand the owl's attempts to point at the wall of trees. If, instead of start pulling the man's vest, the owl had used one of his wings to point directly at the wall, the man might have understood better. If the owl was not physically capable of using a wing to point, but only for flight, or if he was unaware of that sort of human language, he could perhaps attempt to make like the dogs and other mammals do, and walk halfway towards where he wants the man to go, look back at him, and repeat until he understands the owl wants him to follow him. Since he lives in the forest, the owl might have seen how other animals communicate, such as wolves. Therefore, being in the presence of another different species, he would probably decide to try and use a foreign language of his knowledge, in order to make the man understand him. Regardless of the methods chosen by the owl, after understanding the message, the man would walk over to the wall of trees, and if at that point, he stopped, not sure of what to do next, the owl would likely start flying between the trees, as an attempt to show the man that he should walk in that direction. The story would end in a very similar manner to how it ends in the original, but in less time and with less stress for both characters.

The second moment the two characters are in conflict, is when the owl is pulling the man's vest. The man scares the owl away, because he sees that as a petty attempt to irritate him. Perhaps he could have chosen to do something else about it. The man is quick to judge the owl for being an animal, and never stops to consider that perhaps this animal could be in fact trying to tell him something. Supposing he wasn't so quick on his judgment, and gave himself mental room to ponder on the possibility of there being more to this animal's intentions than to simply irritate him, he might have remembered other animals, and even people, in certain situations involving one wanting the other to follow him. The person or animal would want the other to follow him so much that he would even grab his arm and give slight pulls, as a physical way to express his wish and how much he wants it to happen, whatever it takes. The man would probably also remember seeing animals, dogs in most cases, pulling from the owners' trousers with their mouths, as a way of convincing them to go to a certain place. The harder they pulled, the more their urge to make their owners follow them. The man would probably only have seen such moments on television. In that case, he wouldn't have an exact way of being able to tell whether an animal, namely a dog or an owl, is capable or not of having such human-like behaviors. However, because he had not been so quick to judge the owl for the animal he sees him as, and had given himself the required time to ponder on the situation, he would likely be willing to take a chance and see if the owl pulling his vest had some important meaning after all.

Both moments have similar solutions in the owl's case. Every time he's trying to communicate with the man without succeeding, the man is representing an obstacle in the

owl's path. In these moments of conflict, the man is wearing a **Threshold Guardian** mask. To overcome this obstacle, the owl needs to tame the guardian. He needs to become a **Shapeshifter**. In other words, adapt to something that better fits the nature of the present guardian. When a character wants to say something to another, but that second one is not able to understand him, one course of action would be to try alternative ways to communicate, such as gestures. The first character would need to think about what **other forms of communication** might be more familiar to the second character than the ones that are familiar to him, which aren't working. So the owl tries to communicate with the man in a way someone of his species would understand, rather than how an owl would usually communicate—the owl would be using **Accommodation**.

In parallel, the owl represents an obstacle for the man as well. He's trying to find a way back to the camp, but the owl is making it difficult for him to think. He's unable to understand his confusing behavior, which keeps frequently changing. He's never sure what the owl is trying to do, and whether it's an ally or an enemy. From the man's point of view, the owl is wearing a **Shapeshifter** mask. What the man needs to do is to be patient with the owl. Calm down, think hard why this character is behaving that way, and give the owl time to find a way to communicate which he can understand—the man would be using **Avoidance**. Then, after he figured out the owl's real intentions, he would use **Accommodation**, giving in to the owl's wish for him to walk in the direction he's pointing at.

In the actual events of the short film, in these two moments of conflict, both characters are competing with each other (**Competition**), since both want to accomplish their goals their own way, without trying to understand the other side. They both represent the **Shadow**, for being each other's reason for being in conflict.

The audience has the privilege to witness the story from both characters' points of view, which allows them to understand the owl's true intentions. The owl is a **Mentor**, even though the man only becomes aware of it by the end of the story. Since the owl knows at least more than the man about the forest, he knows how to help him, which is what he tries to do. As a **Mentor**, he has more knowledge and experience, and a higher and expanded view of this world new to the man.⁵

The third moment the two characters are in conflict is when the owl is flying in front of the man. At that point, the owl is angry, which is causing him to unintentionally scare the man, further confusing him. In addition to that, the owl doesn't realize how menacing he looks to him. He's wearing the mask of the **Shadow**, from both the man and the audience's perspective. He's still trying to reach his goal, but the current action he chose to reach it is making it more difficult for him. By scaring the man, he's sabotaging himself and increasing the conflict—the owl is **competing** with him, trying to make things happen his way by force. It's possible to discuss what the owl could have done instead, and also what he could have done if he realized sooner the unwanted results his actions were having. For starters, what the

⁵ This fact is visually shown in the story, since the owl lives up in the trees, which allows him to see the man's camp.

owl could have decided to do instead of flying in front of the man was to steal his hat already at this point. If the owl chose this method, he wouldn't be playing the role of the Shadow, at least not in the audience's point of view. The man would feel angry instead of scared, and would follow the owl to regain his hat (similar to what happens in the short film). Alternatively, let's suppose that after starting to fly in an angry manner in front of the man, instead of being solely focused on his own frustration and objective, the owl paid attention to his reaction. The owl would probably calm down, fly back, slowly land on the ground and, without taking his eyes off the man, walk around him and in the direction he wants the man to go. It's possible that, similar to the situations discussed above, the man would think to himself thoroughly about the situation, assemble the pieces, and understand the owl's message. By being conscious about the man's reaction, the owl would understand that attempt of his had failed and would try a new one. He would be using **Avoidance**, ceasing the conflict and giving room to the man. With this new attempt of guiding the man, he'd be allowing **Collaboration** to take place. Both would be looking for a way to fulfill their goals without either of them feeling they're sacrificing something.

Now looking at the same situation but from the man's perspective, the owl poses an obstacle to him—a **Threshold Guardian** and a **Shadow**. The man needs to find a way to overcome it. He knows at least one thing about owls, which is that they're sensitive to the light. When he grabs the flashlight, he points it at him, which causes the owl to fly away. The man is taking away the **Shadow's** powers. It's a partial victory though, because he still doesn't understand the owl's real intentions. What could the man have done differently when the owl started flying in front of him? Perhaps, after trying to cover his face but before falling and reaching for his flashlight, the man would have started running in the opposite direction, away from the owl. By backing away or running from the owl, the man is using **Avoidance**. He sees the owl as a threat due to a lack of understanding. Here, the owl is a **Shadow** in the man's point of view as well. If he understood him, and knew what his real intentions were, he would not feel the need to defend himself or run away. Because he was scared to the point of doing that, he would probably be distracted and run past the path he had arrived through in the beginning of the story. He would stop near the wall of trees, and would believe he found himself in a dead end. The owl would fly a few meters more in his direction. Seeing that the man was now going in the right direction, the owl would cease his flight, and simply stand on the ground in front of him. The man would feel trapped, so the outcome of this situation would vary. Either he would choose to walk through the thick wall in order to escape the owl (**Avoidance**, but also **Accommodation** to the owl, even though he wouldn't be aware), or he would try to slowly walk along the wall until he reached the path he had come from. There are other paths available, most of them being on the other side of the owl, however. This would leave the man with only two choices: either the wall or the path he had originally come from. If he chose to try to go through that path, the owl would likely start flapping his wings, to scare the man and show him he's not going to let him do that. Both would be in **Competition**, not willing to give in to the other's wish. Maybe the man would try to outsmart the owl, by moving towards one direction very fast, making the owl follow him and leave the other path

clear. The man would suddenly shift and run in the direction he originally intended, much to the owl's frustration. The owl would likely never be able to catch the man and convince him to go in the right direction, and the man would take hours or days to find the camp. However, assuming the man was still tired from the long walk around the forest, he wouldn't feel enough strength to try to outsmart the owl. Eventually, finding himself out of ideas, he would venture through the thick wall of trees. Assuming he would continue to go on a somewhat straight line, he would very soon find the camp—he would be **accommodating** without realizing it. He probably would never find out what the owl was trying to do, but nevertheless, both goals would be accomplished.

The fourth and last moment of conflict is after the man points his flashlight directly at the owl's face. At that moment, the owl is hovering in the air, preparing to fly fast towards the man and stealing his hat. The man himself is standing by, holding his flashlight close, and ready to defend himself should the owl do anything else. At this moment, the two characters are in **Competition** and are both **Shadows**. The situation is similar to when two rock mountains are next to each other, and both begin to collapse at the same time. The rocks coming down from both mountains will hit each other and there's no possibility to stop it. In the case of the two characters, there's probably nothing to prevent this situation to shift. They're both deeply engaged in doing what they're intending, and the chances of either changing their mind are unlikely, since each one feels that backing away at that moment would result in failure. The man would be injured, since he thinks the owl will attack him, and the owl would miss his chance of trying one last thing to make the man follow him. However, it's possible that a third element suddenly added to the action would bring a different outcome. If, for example, a thunderstorm began and a lightning hit a tree close to the owl, just in the middle of his descent, the owl would interrupt it and fly away from it. The tree, after being hit, would begin to fall, about to land in the spot the man is standing. The man would run to avoid being hit, and because this tree was placed between both characters when it was hit, he would actually be running in the opposite direction of the one the owl was trying to block. He would likely run through the wall of trees, covering considerable distance due to how scared he was, and he would eventually reach his camp. The owl would come back moments later, see that the man was at the camp, and would go back to sleep.

By running away from the lightning and the falling tree, the man and the owl would be **avoiding** the conflict. Additionally, Hooks' rule would be applied, stating that a character will only be playing an action in pursuit of his objective until something forces him to change direction. Both characters are particularly engaged in their own objectives at this climactic moment of the story, but by suddenly introducing a threatening element, they're forced to stop what they're doing and go someplace else, in order to avoid being severely injured.

Stealing the man's hat is the most effective strategy to deal with the conflict that the owl makes throughout the story. As it's verifiable, the man is attached to personal objects, to the point of being willing to chase a thief. With this last attempt, the owl has finally understood

how the man works. He has successfully brought the **Shadow** over to the light, and now understands him. By knowing how to deal with him, the owl has taken away the power the **Shadow** had over him, and has reached his goal. It is the same thing in the man's point of view. He now understands the owl and knows how to deal with him. The two characters have overcome their obstacles, both have reached the goal of taking the man back to the camp, and they are now allies.

In the beginning and the ending of the story, there are three moments where the owl is in conflict with the man, even though the man is not in conflict with him. In either situation, the owl is sleeping in his tree. The obstacles that keep him from being able to continue to do so are the man's flashlight in the first moment, and the noise in the two remaining ones. In the beginning, the noise comes from the man, and in the ending, it comes from the music in the camp, partly caused by the man. By examining these situations, it's possible to draw conclusions and think of alternative outcomes, as it has been done above.

When the man accidentally points the flashlight at him, the owl moves to the side and observes him for a few seconds. Here, he's choosing to **avoid** conflict. Instead of coming down towards the man when the light wakes him up (which he does only later on), he decides to examine the situation from a distance. When the man resumes his walking, the flashlight is no longer pointing at where the owl was, so he **avoids** conflict again by returning to his home and trying to go back to sleep.

In the first moment noise is the owl's obstacle, he realizes he can't keep sleeping, so he decides to fly closer to the man and examine the situation better. Here, the man represents a **Threshold Guardian**, an obstacle keeping the owl from reaching his goal. What he does is to try to understand him. He ponders what the man's problem must be, and as he does, he sees the camp in the distance. After gaining a clearer understanding of the situation, he comes down and attempts to **collaborate** with the man, which is what happens in the final story. What could he have done differently? If he already fully knew the man's true nature, he could have stolen his hat at that point. If he didn't know as much, but still more than he actually knows in the story, he could have tried any of the other things he did in different moments. The owl looks at the obstacle this other character represents, and attempts to find solutions. Each mistake takes him closer to finding a real one, causing him to evolve, to transform during the process. He becomes someone more capable of dealing with such challenges.

In the second moment where noise is the owl's obstacle, what could he have done differently to prevent it from ruining his sleep? Since he doesn't possess the ability to speak, he's unable to go confront whoever's responsible for the noise and tell them about his difficulty in sleeping. Therefore, he needs to find a solution by himself. He tries to **avoid** conflict, and at the same time, he's **competing** with the noise. He sees it both as a **Threshold Guardian** and a **Shadow**, so he tries to tame it, thus removing its power over him. Since he lives in a tree, he could probably cover the entrance of the hole with twigs and leaves, similar to building a nest, hoping that it would muffle it. However, the chances of him succeeding at it and having a

peaceful night are slim, considering making a proper wall able to block sound would take hours, costing him time for his desired sleep. In addition, it's probable that the ability for this new wall to block the sound would not be as efficient as the owl would hope, because of the possible holes in it. The solution that would seem more fit for the owl would likely be to go find another tree to sleep in, farther from the source of the noise. He would have arrived at the conclusion that the noise has a limit of reach. He can remove its power by keeping enough distance from it. This action solves the owl's conflict, and allows him to transform.

During the course of the story, the audience witnesses the man and the owl facing challenges and obstacles. As they overcome them, they allow both characters to achieve self-improvement. After examining the moments of conflict and considering the alternative paths and consequences, it's time to look at how in the final story both characters have in fact been transformed by the experience.

How has the man evolved? After he arrives at the camp he was looking for, he realizes the owl was trying to help him all along—he's no longer a **Shapeshifter** in his eyes. After picking back up the things he had dropped along the way, he **avoids** repeating his mistake of tripping over a root, by carefully paying attention to where he walks. After having this experience, it's likely that, if he ever finds himself in a similar situation, he'll be more opened to accepting help from the animals of the forest—**Accommodation**. He'll think twice before feeling alarmed by an animal who seems to be having an unusual behavior towards him, since it may be just trying to tell him something. He no longer looks at the animals like the owl as enemies or obstacles, but as allies.

How has the owl evolved? He didn't know at first how to accomplish the objective of helping the man, and the more things he tried, the more difficult the situation appeared to become. But now that he has helped someone with a frustrating problem, however hard it was, he has learned which of his **techniques for communication** with people work better. If he ever comes across someone else who is lost, he'll know better how to help them find their way back, and chances are he'll be able to do it faster and with much less stress for both ends, thus preventing a conflict. He'll also be able to understand people better. He'll know whether to be subtle or more invasive right from the beginning, based on the person's reaction to his first attempts. Will they be clueless and try to ignore him, or will they be curious what the owl might be trying to tell them? If the person reacts similarly to the first case, the owl may decide earlier to steal the hat or another object from them. If on the contrary they're like the one described in the second case, he'll simply keep pointing at the direction he wants the person to go. That person will eventually go explore that area.

3.4. Reasons why they're in conflict and why they should be friends

One character's chosen action to pursue his objective is simultaneously an obstacle in the objective pursued by the other. This is the main reason each character is in conflict with the other. Everything the man tries to do to find his camp makes it harder for the owl to guide

him. And everything the owl does to help the man only makes him more convinced that the owl is trying to attack him. **Both characters have moments where they're acting as an obstacle to the other, even if unintentionally**—the man not being able to understand the owl, and the owl acting as if he's trying to attack the man.

In this subchapter, the reasons the man and the owl are in conflict are looked at. And from those reasons, conclusions are drawn, which are then used to describe why they should be friends.

What drives the owl? What are his motivations? The owl's **initial objective** in the story is to sleep. When he's no longer able to do it, he goes to find out what the obstacle is. He finds the man, and the camp he's trying to find. His new, but temporary, objective is to take the man back to the camp so that he can fulfill his initial objective. This is the first reason for conflict between the two characters, albeit one that is currently going only from one character to the other. When **a character pursues an objective, and something happens that creates an obstacle** for him in his pursuit, his **new but temporary objective** is to **clear the obstacle** before being **able to go back to the main and final one**.

When the owl tries to tell the man where his camp is, and he's not able to understand him, the owl becomes frustrated, and that's another reason why they're in conflict: **lack of ability to communicate properly**.

At this moment, besides the conflict the owl has with the man, the man himself is starting to be in conflict with the owl as well. Before that, he was only in **conflict with the situation**—frustrated for not being able to find his camp. But now, he has a **conflict with another character**. From his point of view, the owl seems to be trying to irritate him by having strange behaviors next to him.

The man keeps misinterpreting the owl, so his frustration increases. It appears that it's taking longer than he expected to take the man back to his camp. The owl then makes other attempts, gradually more aggressive, to make the man understand him. The longer it takes, the more intense the owl's anger and aggressiveness are. When the man points his flashlight at him, the owl decides to steal his hat as a last resort, which is the best way he knows how to force someone to follow him. The plan works, the conflict the owl has with the man ends, and he's able to go back to sleep. When a character pursues an objective that seems to be taking a long time to reach, becoming gradually harder, the character may become frustrated, but persistence allows him to eventually reach his objective.

After looking at the owl's case, and at some of the reasons behind the conflict between both characters, it's important to also look at the man's reasons to be in conflict.

What drives the man? What are his motivations? His **initial objective** is to help his friends by offering to go get the firewood. But when he finds himself lost in the woods, what he wishes is to find his way back. Right now, he is in **conflict** both with the **situation** and with **himself**. His situation is that he's lost in the forest. What puts him in conflict with himself is that he knows it's his own fault. Perhaps, he thinks to himself that maybe if he had brought a clearer

map, or hadn't decided to go look for better wood than the one closer to the camp, he would be back hours ago. The embarrassing mistake of tripping over two roots one directly after the other further increases the conflict he's having with himself. The main points of conflict at this moment in the story are: he's lost, he feels embarrassed for it, he's tired of aimlessly wandering through the forest, and he's angry because of all three points. He becomes even angrier as he keeps being caught by his own clumsiness, and because of the fact that the map is not clear. He decides to sit down and think what he'll do next. He'll have to calm down first, because he's nearly unable to speak or think because of how furious he is at the current moment. He's using **Avoidance**.

After he meets the owl, the conflict with himself and his situation momentarily changes into a **conflict with another character**, as it was explained above, in the owl's conflicts. The man is puzzled by his behavior, and it only becomes worse when the owl starts pulling his vest. As the man manages to get rid of the owl, his conflict switches back to being with his **situation**. It's not as much with himself that he is in conflict anymore, because now he's more focused on trying to find a way to return to the camp. He's working on letting go of his negative feelings in order to solve the situation—**Avoidance** again. After looking at the compass, he decides on one path, even though he's not completely sure. At this point, the owl comes back, and is now apparently trying to attack him, more than simply pestering him like before. Now, the man's **conflict is with the owl** again, and instead of wanting to return to the camp, he has a new objective. He believes he needs to defeat him in order to be able to keep looking for his camp in peace. The owl steals his hat, he goes after the owl, even willing to go through a deep area filled with trees. He doesn't know, and neither has any way to find out how deep that dark area is, so it's not a path he would have chosen if he wasn't so engaged in his objective. His anger at this point has reached a level where he's no longer thinking straight. Right now, the thing he wants more than anything else is to defeat the owl and regain his hat. Soon, he finds his camp again. All the conflict is gone, to the point where the man manages to hold back his tendency to be clumsy, and carefully walks over the root of a tree.

After looking at the reasons why the two characters are in conflict, it's possible to look at the reasons why they should be friends.

What do the two of them have in common? Both characters have a **common final objective**, which is to help the man find his camp. However, the two characters have **different partial objectives**—sub-goals to achieve in order to, hopefully, reach the final one. Each character has a different way of pursuing the final objective, which results in disagreements between them. Both want the man to leave, but the man doesn't understand that what the owl is doing is to help him reach his goal quicker. There's a **communication problem** since both characters have different ways of doing it. If the man knew what the owl was trying to do, they'd have **common partial objectives** as well, rather than just the final one. If they were able to communicate through words, they would likely form an **alliance**, maybe even a friendship. The owl would be able to articulately tell the man where his camp is, and the man would be thankful for the owl's assistance. If the owl did not know initially where the camp was, a **Compromise**, or even better, **Collaboration** would be necessary. The owl would try to

help the man find the camp, perhaps by helping him retrace his steps. Since the owl has the primary objective to sleep, the man would allow him do so on his shoulder, at some points along the way while he didn't need his guidance. He would also promise to make the least amount of noise and to walk quietly. Together, they would find the camp, all their goals would have been reached, and the man would have made a new friend.

The two characters seem to have a considerable degree of intelligence, therefore the main reason why they can't communicate is language barrier. If they had more chances to meet each other after the events of this short film, as the man interacted more with the owl, he would be able to detect patterns in his behavior, and eventually, he would be able to understand him to a considerable extent. The owl would also be able to learn how to communicate better with him, since he would himself detect patterns in the man's way of thinking, so he would be able to find out with what gestures he's able to help the man understand him more easily.

3.5. Conclusions taken from this case study

The story in this short film revolves around the two main characters and their interactions with each other, which makes their relationship one of the two narrative conflicts—the primary one being the man trying to find a way back to his camp.

The poles of the conflict both characters face throughout the story were defined in the beginning, which provided a basis to help understand the reasons why they're in conflict with each other and at what points each conflict takes place. This also helped to see how many narrative conflicts were in the story.

Each of the moments of conflict was thoroughly observed, discussing alternative actions for the characters to take, as well as their influence on the direction of the story and on the characters. The theoretic material provided by Hooks (2011), Vogler (1998) and Hartzell (n.d.) was applied whenever appropriate.

After this, the reasons for conflict both characters come across throughout the story were observed. According to Hooks, the characters could be in conflict either with themselves, the situation, or each other. All the moments in which the characters experienced at least one of those examples was discussed, proposing alternative actions for them to take and looking at the consequences.

To finish this case study, the reasons why the two characters should be friends were discussed as well, based on the moments of conflict and the reasons for it that had been previously discussed.

These observations allowed to separate the story into pieces, and to look at each being able to understand the kind of influence they have on each other. It became possible to understand the moments each character is in conflict, understand why, how it could be solved, and how it would transform the character. Each action taken by one character influenced the other, and the consequences from that action caused each character to respond accordingly, and the story

to advance in a certain way. Depending on the situation and the action chosen by each character, the conflict could continue, increase, or stop completely.

The message that is delivered to the audience—that the thing or place we're looking for can be closer than we think, and the help may come from unexpected sources; and sometimes, the path for what we're looking for may be through a whole different path than the one we had envisioned—is a message that doesn't require to be solely related to relationships. This message in the short film can be applied to groups, but also to a single person trying to overcome a challenge. This message may teach the members of the audience to pay closer attention to unusual sources of help, such as someone they know but weren't expecting them to be able to provide useful assistance.

Another story where this same message could be delivered could be something along the lines of: A group of experienced scientists is busy in their laboratory trying to find a cure for a disease. Next to them, for example, is a twelve-year-old nephew of one of the scientists. He's bored, looking around the lab, and being countless times told not to touch anything. At some point, the scientists reach a dead end in their research. The young boy, who has been watching them for several minutes, suddenly points out something very simple, but which surprisingly turns out to be what they needed to be able to go back to their work and be successful in their research.

4. Conclusions and perspectives on future projects

Having reached the last chapter of this dissertation, it's time to answer the main question and bring up the conclusions taken in each section.

What's the role of the conflict between two non-antagonistic characters in the evolution of the narrative and the transformation of those characters?

Through the course of the dissertation, several examples of conflicting relationships between contrasting non-antagonistic characters were discussed, bringing forth the consequences of their conflicts in the evolution of both the characters and the story. It was discussed how a narrative works and unfolds (or not) with these kinds of characters, thanks to their assigned functions, their interactions with each other, their conflicts, the ways of solving them and its consequences. The theme was explored in historical-technological, theoretic and artistic contextualization, providing different answers to the question, as discussed below.

In the Historical-Technological Context, the examined subjects were related to the evolutions of Animation, characters and relationships, and the messages the stories presented. Over time, characters became more complex. They deal with inner conflicts, and deal with deeper emotions more often than before. So, two complex non-antagonistic characters can also have a complex relationship. The more complex the characters are, the more complex are the internal conflicts they deal with. If these two characters are in conflict with each other, it's possible for their conflict to be complex as well. Complex characters may have complex ways of dealing with the conflict. These consequences may allow the story to proceed in new original ways. One character's strategies to deal with the conflict with another one may be more creative and original than otherwise, from a storytelling point of view. The characters learn something from the experience and evolve/transform. Because they are complex, the way they evolve may be also more creative and original.

Because of the need for positive influences in television and movies, nowadays characters receive the consequences from their actions more than in the start of Animation. The consequences of a character's actions are reflected in the characters around him—the way they react—and possibly in the direction the story proceeds, being an indication of whether or not this character is a fit role-model, especially if he's the protagonist.

The consequences of a character's actions can be a way to inform the character if he's succeeding while pursuing his objective or not. They inform him if the results are the desired ones, based on his intentions. If the consequences are negative to his objective, that information brings the need for the character to adopt new strategies and attitudes towards the existing situation.

Animation arrived in the beginning of the century, as a form of entertainment for the masses, but became a source of entertainment primarily for children and families. Creators became more concerned about the age of the audience and what should or not be shown. Mickey Mouse started as being mischievous and cruel, but gradually became more harmless and

younger-looking, with the intention to send a message of innocence concerning Disney as an entity and their family-oriented stories. The gradual increase in the need from the audience to have better influences for the younger viewers played a defining part in influencing what kinds of messages were delivered: for example, drinking is a bad habit (Tintin and Haddock), and friendship is an important aspect of life (My Little Pony). Gradually, the way the messages were delivered changed as well. They became more profound, believable and subtle—fused within the storyline, the characters and their relationships. The consequences of their acts are reflected in the reactions of the characters around them. Messages and morals can have a bigger impact on the audience this way, rather than when they're merely spoken by the characters at some point in the story. In this sense, it is important to give more consideration to the relationship between two non-antagonistic characters as a primary mean to send messages in stories, as it's done in *My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic*.

In the Theoretical and Artistic Contexts, several examples were looked at, allowing a more vast understanding of how to tell stories based on the friendship or partnership of two contrasting characters. Special attention was paid to the conflict, its causes and ways of solving them, and its role in the evolution of the characters and the narrative.

As it was possible to verify through the artistic works, the causes for two non-antagonistic characters to be in conflict with each other can be difference in opinions, difference in ways of dealing with a task or situation, competition/rivalry, envy, impatience and lack of tolerance about the contrasts between each other, one being mischievous and trying to distract or irritate the other, one thinking the other is sabotaging his work but is actually trying to help, or one of them having to keep an eye on the other to prevent him from putting himself in harm's way or simply being distracted.

Two contrasting characters that frequently disagree with each other will have difficulty in remaining together. A reason might be to find points in which they agree on, which allows them to keep following their common goal together. If they've known each other for some time, the foundations of their relationship may be strengthened, which allows them to keep having a steady partnership and put their differences aside as they proceed with their quest. Another reason might be because they're forced to stay together (by a superior force or authority) even when they don't want to work together or talk to each other. Other times, the two characters have separate goals, but one of them agrees to help the other because he knows that by reaching the other's goal, his own can be reached along the way.

According to Hartzell (n.d.), the ways of solving the conflict can be Avoidance (for example by giving each other time to calm down and put things in perspective), Accommodation (for example, one instantly agreeing with the other), Competition, (keep insisting on his own way to be followed), Compromise, giving in on the condition that the other allows a portion of the deal to be done as the first character wants, or Collaboration, in which both think together to find a common ground that meets each character's preference.

The consequences brought by either the conflict between the characters or its solving can have an internal or an external impact, causing change. An internal impact is a primary result of the conflict, and it's within the relationship or one of the characters. An external impact is a secondary result, and can be either intentional or unintentional. That impact can happen in another character outside the conflict or in the direction of the narrative. By communicating, the two characters begin to comprehend each other, and thus learn from each other. Sometimes, they only begin to understand each other after one of them feels the weight of the consequences caused by his acts. By seeing undesired consequences in the situation (story) or other character, this character is now more willing to change his ways of pursuing an objective, and to try to understand the other character's point of view.

The archetypes of the characters are able to provide the artist and the scientist a way to identify why a certain character has the influence it has on the narrative and the other characters. According to Vogler (1998), each archetype has a specific function, and can be worn by any character at any given time, however briefly, depending on what influence it needs to have on the story or the characters at a specific point.

It's possible to look at the conflict a character is having with the other as a simplified version of the Hero's Journey, with more attention being given to the stage "Tests, Allies, Enemies". Every hero goes through tests through the course of the story, and a conflict between two characters can be considered one of those tests. During this stage in the Hero's Journey, the hero finds obstacles, which can be other characters—Threshold Guardians or Shadows. When facing such obstacles, the hero instead of giving up, must find a way to pass, to overcome the obstacle, using different strategies. Each attempt will have some consequence on the obstacle, and it may not work on allowing the hero to proceed. The hero keeps trying other strategies, based on their positive or negative consequences. He'll slowly begin to learn more about how the obstacle is. The more strategies he uses to deal with the conflict, the more he will be transformed, and become more experienced, wiser, and stronger.

In the Artistic Context, each of the discussed examples featured, in a particular way, certain aspects of the theoretic material. These examples show distinct cases of non-antagonistic characters, and the ways they affect each other, or affect other characters and the narrative itself. In contrast, one of the examples featured a relationship between two characters which conflict doesn't necessarily play a significant role in the story.

Chapter 3 served as a case study made with this Master's Degree's short film, *A Helping Hoot*. In this case study, the subjects discussed and examined previously in the Theoretic and Artistic Contexts were thoroughly applied. This allowed the author to observe objectively each moment of conflict, each cause for it, and each way of solving it, together with the corresponding consequence. It became possible to look at each of the pieces separately, and thus suggest minor changes to the story, recognizing and describing the consequences brought by each change, both on each character and the directions the story went (in contrast to what happens in the original story). These observations help recognize the extents of the influence

the conflict is able to have on the transformations of the characters and the unfolding of the narrative of the short film. Just as it is possible to apply the “Tests, Allies, Enemies” stage to the process of dealing with conflict in the Theoretic Context, it’s possible to do the same in the present short film when discussing the situations the two characters experience in it. Each character has a conflict with the other, since both are preventing the other from reaching their goals. Each tries something in order to overcome the obstacle the other represents, and are continuously forced to keep trying new things until each is able to reach their goals. Each character evolves through the experience.

While reading this study, the reader gradually begins to look at the subject as something as important in storytelling as the conflict between heroes and villains, and can understand how it’s not being addressed as much as it should. Given the increase on characters’ complexity, scientists and artists are now in conditions to further develop the matter on complex relationships between characters, especially the non-antagonistic ones. It is suggested that they dedicate themselves to this creative vein, more than they do at this point. Narratives are often planned starting with the narrative or the hero in mind. This study invites scientists and artists to begin making more studies and stories that look at relationships between characters as the starting point for storytelling.

Several obstacles were found during the research for this dissertation. Some were about language barriers. Although the author is able to write fluently in English, the language is not the native one. Therefore, in order to be able to confirm if the used words in the dissertation were correct, the dictionary in the Google search engine was frequently consulted, as well as the one in www.thefreedictionary.com, when the definitions provided by the former were not satisfactory. If a certain used word turned out to have a different meaning than the intended one, a different one was required in its place.

The most challenging obstacles however, were due to the lack of sufficient theoretic material about the subject of conflict between two non-antagonistic characters. As it was verified through the studied information, more attention was paid to the character himself, rather than how he behaves and acts in reaction to an ally or friend that is different than him, and vice-versa; and the influence that relationship can have on the characters while they pursue their objectives. More attention was paid to the conflict between hero and villain, making the conflict between allies a minor subject, mentioned rarely and briefly, and often to help support the main subject, whether it was about, again, hero and villain in conflict, the archetypes, the Hero’s Journey, etc.

Such lack of information about the intended theme of research caused the discoveries of actual valuable material to be far between each other, such as Eder’s studies on characters. Several of them were attained with the help of this dissertation’s advisor, including the added example.

There also doesn't seem to be enough historical studies related to the evolution of relationships between non-antagonistic characters through time. In most of the artistic examples found, classic and modern, the manner in which the characters and their relationships were handled seemed to be associated with the type of story being told, and their own level of technique and wisdom related to storytelling.

The negligence of this issue was made further clear upon receiving no answer from the LinkedIn character-centered group, concerning whether or not there was an evolution in relationships between non-antagonistic characters in animated movies and television series over time. The absence of an answer can reveal a certain lack of awareness concerning this subject.

After the creation of this dissertation, the author will continue the research, and expand upon it, with the intention to further his knowledge about animation and storytelling in general. Namely, the author is interested in examples of stories with more than two characters but less than ten. He would observe the influences a closed group of friends or coworkers can have in each other, and observe what kinds of goals such a constellation can have as a unified force; but also observe the sub-goals, which are caused by each individual character influencing and inspiring the group. Additionally, the author would observe what kind of influence the group can have on the evolution of the story, either as a unified force or each individual contributing in his or her own way. As far as subjects not related to character constellations, but still appropriate for future themes of research, the author is interested in:

- a) visual storytelling, particularly the ability to tell a story without the need to use words or dialogue all throughout the narrative in order to convey a certain idea or emotion;
- b) how to create characters that become unforgettable, that stand out in the cast, whether they're heroes, allies, villains, anti-heroes, or others;
- c) more about heroes and villains, in terms of their motivations and aspirations, captivating personalities, their presence on the screen, how their animated/vocal performance is able to keep the audience's attention and interest in the character and his own point of view in the story.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: A Helping Hoot (DVD) – Duration: 00:05:37

ANNEX: Visual and technical development of *A Helping Hoot*

In order to tell a story in the form of an audio-visual medium, it was necessary to go through all the necessary development stages. This section of the study pays special attention to the processes of conceptualizing and defining the characters and their world in the short film *A Helping Hoot*.



Fig. A.1. Studies for the shape of the man's head and face



Fig. A.2. Sketches of the man's facial expressions and other details of his body, all based on what he would be doing in the story, in terms of action, attitude, and movements



Fig. A.3. Evolution of the man's design, from the first sketch (left), to the final body shape (right)



Fig. A.4. Palette studies for the man's color scheme



Fig. A.5. Evolution of the design of the owl



Fig. A.6. The owl's alternate color schemes

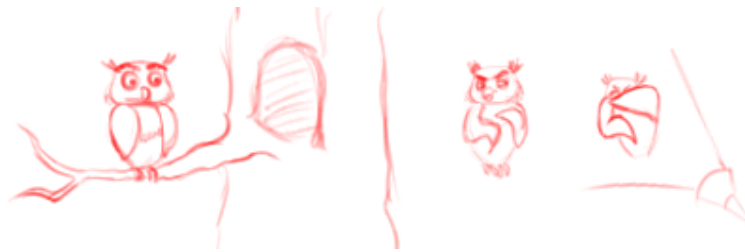


Fig. A.7. Sketches of varied actions and facial expressions of the first owl



Fig. A.8. Sketches of varied actions and facial expressions of the new owl

The early design of the man was very close to the final one, since the parts that got more extremely changed were the height and length of the legs (short to tall, fat to thin), and the shape of the torso, from the shape of a pear, to a more cylindrical build. However, for the owl, it was necessary to give him a more radical change from the first design to the final one. Since the man was blue, an unusual skin color, and since physically he looked very different from an actual human being, the owl, which was brown and looked very similar to a real one, needed to be adjusted to the design of the man, in order to make both characters appear to inhabit the same world. The way they presently looked, made it seem like one of the

characters was from an entirely different animation, and had been brought into this one without being adjusted to this other world's visual rules and guidelines—in other words, this present short film's art direction.

At a certain point in the early stages of development, the possibility was discussed that the man could be an alien who was stranded on planet Earth, and looking for his ship to return home. That would justify his unrealistic look in comparison to the more realistic owl and forest. Another possibility that was discussed was to make the entire storyworld an alien world, a forest located in a distant and fictional planet. That would justify the man's design as well, and the needed changes would be to adjust the look and colors of the forest, and the design of the owl.

Despite these possibilities for a design coherency among the characters and their world, it was clear for the creative team that turning either character into an alien or the forest into an alien one, would damage the narrative and the message that was intended to send across. A man, although blue and simplified, but an actual person just like the ones in the audience, trying to overcome a frustrating situation, even though he doesn't see the solution that stands surprisingly very close to him, is what was intended to be transmitted. If the character was an alien trying to find his ship, or the forest was alien as well and located in a distant planet, the simple and relatable message risked itself to become lost in the middle of the science-fiction details of the storyworld.

As part of the assignment to produce an animated short film, it was necessary to make various tests for the designs and color schemes of the characters. Therefore, some alternative palettes were made for both the characters. After the palette for one of the characters (usually the protagonist—the man in this case) was chosen, it was necessary to make sure the palette chosen for the next character (the owl) would not be too similar to the other, so that the two characters could contrast with each other both visually and in terms of personality. It was also important that both characters had palettes that looked well together, and not hard to look at or bland in the eyes of the viewer. Ultimately, the first palette made for the man was the one picked, and he remained blue. For the owl, since he needed to, like the man, have a color palette unrealistic for an animal of that kind, the top four choices were purple, red, blue and green. Since purple was the only color not present in the man's first and final palette, and since that color looked harmonious with blue (the two colors are close to one another), the owl, in his new design, became purple.

As the storyboards were being developed, it was gradually realized that along the story the man would need to perform certain movements and poses that would be very difficult to do so properly with his legs remaining as short as they started out as; for example, to sit on a log and placing the elbows on the knees for support. Therefore, to make his movements and poses more believable, the man's legs became taller and thinner, and his arms became slightly thinner as well, to make both arms and legs more similar and appear to be part of the same body. As the legs became taller, the man's height didn't change, the reason being that the

torso had started as being taller than usual, so it was simply shortened to give room to make the legs taller.

The owl, as it became purple, it also became smaller, and with bigger eyes because owls are birds with large round eyes; and because in this new design he doesn't talk, therefore a better way to understand his thoughts and emotions is through his eyes, so they ought to be large, in order to leave a more significant impact on his performance, both towards the audience, and in his interaction with the man. In addition to these changes, the owl also lost his beard and eyebrows, making him appear younger, at least in the middle of his life. When he was supposed to talk, he was meant to give the impression of a wise old man, with the way he talked and the deep philosophical thoughts he shared with the man as they talked. However, when that version of the story was put aside, the owl's character now needed to be agile and able to display anger, frustration and lack of patience.

In the end of this stage, the blue man remained as he was originally designed, except his physical appearance changed only slightly to fit with the movements he would need to make along the story. The owl became purple and shorter, and the trees and bushes were given simplified shapes, and were made silhouettes that would become less dark the more distant they were to the camera or the characters. The color palette of the forest was defined to stand between blue and green, both to fit the night theme, and to give the audience the impression of an actual forest. The still of the film shown in the beginning of Chapter 3 provides a clear look at the final look of the forest.

The visual aspect of the short film plays an important role in the narrative, by showing to the audience the tension and the conflict between the two characters, as well as its evolution stages. From the moment the owl starts flying in front of the man, up until the moment he arrives at the camp, most of the camera shots are shorter in duration, making for a more frequent switch in camera angles, which helps to show the level of tension and conflict in the present moment. The shorter the duration of each shot, the higher is the tension in a given moment. In addition, a considerable amount of those shots shows the faces of the characters from a close range, and the reason that happens is to emphasize their present feelings and emotions, and show that to the audience in a clear unmistakable way. To better explain this point, one of the shots will be looked at in more detail.



Fig. A.9. Close shot of the owl when flying in front of the man, and his reaction seen in the following shot

In the first of these shots, the audience sees the point of view of the man, and what he's looking at is a very angry and scary-looking owl flying and "hooting" in a shouting manner, which, in the man's opinion, constitutes a threat to him. This shot serves two purposes, one is to show the owl's anger and impatience, and the point those have reached at this point. Another purpose is to help the audience feel (or understand) what the man is feeling, by showing them exactly what he's seeing. Several members of the audience should be able to understand how it feels to have a small but angry animal looking at them and standing at that close distance to them—they would feel they're about to be attacked, and have a similar reaction to the one of the man, in which he attempts to cover his face and back away. If they don't understand how it feels, this short film would give them a small idea of how they would feel if it was happening to them. In a way, it is happening to them, since in this shot the owl is almost looking directly at the metaphorical camera (which translates as the viewer's eyes). Depending on the shot, and each viewer's way of looking at the world, the audience is then able to empathize with the emotions of both characters.

It's important to make clear that, between the two moments listed above, the owl flying in front of the man and the man finding the camp, there are in fact a few shots that last slightly longer than the previous and the following ones. The reason for this is that those slightly longer shots serve as anticipation for the tension spikes that follow. They don't last long enough for the tension level to drop, but help enhance the way the next shots will perform at showing the intensity of the conflict /tension they're intended to show to the audience. A good example of these shots is after the man points the flashlight directly at the owl. What happens next is a shot where the owl flies high up in the air, literally leaving the tension hanging high up, and the audience in expectation. Then, after a shot showing the reaction of the man, the owl starts flying rapidly at him, preparing to steal his hat. It's also worth pointing out that in these moments, the conflict and the tension is visually shown not just by the shots, but also by the movements of the camera (again, a metaphorical camera). Up until that point in the narrative, the camera very rarely moved, and in the times it did, it did so in a slower manner, only for such purposes as accompanying a character moving towards another point in the scenery.