

Amanda

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Abstract

Amanda is a short animated film shot in stereo 3D. It uses fairytale motifs to explore the process of maturation in childhood.

This can be a frustrating period in the growth of a child. They have developed from a time when emotion was their only way to communicate with the world, and are now verbalizing their thoughts, but have not mastered the language to a degree that they can fully express themselves. Where once, screaming or crying was sufficient to get their parents to try and meet their needs, now their parents will use screaming and crying as a reason to deny them what they want. They often feel pressure from parents to behave in a mature fashion that their cognitive abilities may not yet be capable of.

My story revolves around Amanda, a young girl whose inability to control her negative emotions puts her in a dark place. This is personified in the form of an enormous Troll, who chases her down and swallows her whole. She must use her intelligence to defeat the Troll, in order to escape and return home.

I have attempted to use the 3D technology to create a heightened sense of reality in the fantasy world of her imagination.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Illustrations	v
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: The Story	4
Chapter 3: Symbolism and Metaphor	9
Chapter 4: Relationship to My Previous Work	15
Chapter 5: Film and Literary Influences	17
Chapter 6: The Use of Stereo 3D	19
Basic Technical Explanation of Stereo 3D	20
Production Design for 3D	21
Camera Work for 3D Film.....	23
Stereo 3D as an Artistic Tool.....	28
Chapter 7: Conclusion.....	30
Bibliography	32
Filmography.....	32

List of Illustrations

Figure 1. Concept drawing of Amanda in the swamp.	1
Figure 2. Production still: Amanda encounters the Troll.	4
Figure 3. Concept art: the Troll swallows Amanda.	6
Figure 4. Concept painting: Troll’s head.	7
Figure 5. Character design: Amanda and Troll.	9
Figure 6. Still from movie: Amanda and Troll.	12
Figure 7. Character expressions.	14
Figure 8. Original character design: Amanda.	14
Figure 9. Ball and socket armature for Amanda.	16
Figure 10. CGI modeled head in preparation for 3D printing.	18
Figure 11. 3D printed replacement faces.	18
Figure 12. Sketchup model of swamp set.	29

Chapter 1: Introduction

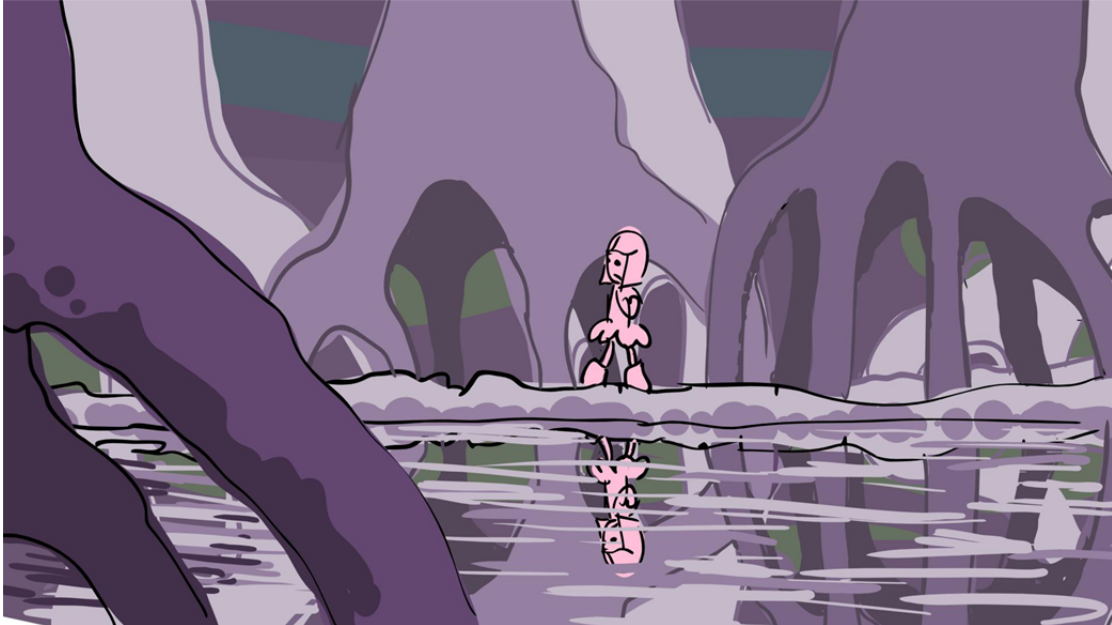


Figure 1. Concept drawing of Amanda in the swamp.

Amanda is a seven and a half minute stop-motion animated film, shot in 3D stereo.

The film is aimed at a young audience and uses fairy tale motifs to explore the process of maturation in a child moving from being governed by emotions in early childhood to gaining control and becoming more thoughtful and rational through maturity.

I am very interested in making work for children and really like the power that fairy tales hold, the way that they burrow deep beneath the logic and rationality of adulthood to the wild and emotional psyche of a child. I'm also fascinated by the

way stories that seem very simple on the surface can have so many layers of meaning.

I chose this project for a number of reasons. Foremost was to develop my writing skills. Like many people who go into animation, I am primarily a visual person, which has been a great asset to me in the field, but ultimately film is not simply a visual medium, but also a medium of words, and writing has always been my weakness.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that I found it to be mysterious and terrifying.

While much of my previous work has made use of narrative, the films have generally been experimental in structure. I consciously avoided such basic devices as dialogue, which felt awkward in my hands, preferring instead to work with images.

For a long time I was of the view that writing was something which you could either do, or not do, and I was in the “not” column. Eventually, however, it became clear that in order to progress in my career, I needed to overcome this block. Initially I started reading books on screenwriting, and this, combined with the courses I have taken on the subject at York have made me realize that it is a skill that can be learned and developed. While I still have a long way to go before I will consider writing as one of my strengths, I feel that I now understand it far better than I ever

have, and the idea of writing a screenplay is no longer the terrifying prospect it once was.

For this reason I determined to do a conventional narrative film for my thesis project.

I also wished to do a project that would push me in new directions technically.

Because it seemed to suit the film thematically, and since York had the facilities to do it, I chose to shoot the film in stereo 3D.

Chapter 2: The Story

The story begins with a young girl, Amanda, being banished from the house by her mother. She finds herself lost and alone in a dark swamp. She screams angrily about how unfair it is, which attracts the attention of a troll. The troll accuses her of messing up his swamp by tracking mud all over the place.



Figure 2. Production still: Amanda encounters the Troll.

They argue about it in the, “no I didn’t”, “yes you did” manner of children, with rising voices on each back and forth. The troll, being much bigger and louder wins this contest and Amanda flees with fear.

Amanda is pursued through the swamp by the troll, and just as she thinks she has eluded him, he captures her.

The troll doesn’t know what to do with her and consults his brain for an answer, but doesn’t seem to receive a reply. He is about to let her go when his stomach pipes up with a grumble. On the advice of his stomach, he decides that having her for lunch is the answer. He tosses her in the air, opens his mouth wide, and she is swallowed in a single gulp.

Amanda falls through the darkness and lands with a splat on some undigested goo in the Troll’s stomach.

In this dark place she blames her mother for her predicament, saying that her mother knew this was going to happen, and that it was her plan all along. With a dramatic sigh she resigns herself to her fate, and lies down to be digested.



Figure 3. Concept art: the Troll swallows Amanda.

Shortly she gets fidgety and bored. She starts to play idly and then becomes aware of a trickling sound.

Exploring, she finds a very smelly drain, but also a ladder leading up into the darkness.

She climbs the ladder and reaches the troll's head. Two spiral horns stick out of the side walls, and the front has two large orbs that let in light. Vines connect these to a shriveled brain that sits on a small table in the center of the room.

Amanda approaches the brain and wonders aloud what she is looking at.

The troll hears Amanda's voice within his head and mistakes it for his own brain. Thinking quickly Amanda responds to assuage any doubts the troll has about the identity of the voice, and convince him that she really is his brain.

Convincing him that she only sounds odd because of a cold, she begins to gain the upper hand, getting him to act under her direction.



Figure 4. Concept painting: Troll's head.

Hearing her mother call to her from far away, Amanda looks out one of the troll's eyeholes and sees a glimmer of sunlight off in the forest. She directs the troll towards it, but he balks just as they get close. He realizes that he is being fooled, and refuses to step into the light.

They seem to be at an impasse when Amanda gets an idea. She tilts the plate that the brain is sitting on, causing the Troll to lose his balance. He falls into the sunlight and immediately turns to earth, crumbling as he hits the grass in Amanda's backyard.

Amanda emerges from the dirt as her mother appears at the back door.

She joyfully reunites with her mother.

Chapter 3: Symbolism and Metaphor



Figure 5. Character design: Amanda and Troll.

As preparation for this project, I read a number of fairy tales from different sources, as well as Bruno Bettelheim's book on the analysis of fairy tales entitled, *The Uses of Enchantment*. The fairy tale that interested me the most was probably *The Fisherman and the Jinni*.

In the story, a poor fisherman goes out in his boat. After a day of failure he eventually pulls an old bottle out of the water. He uncorks it and releases a powerful

Jinni. The Jinni tells the fisherman that it has been trapped for 400 years. For the first hundred years it thought, "I will be so grateful to whoever frees me, I will shower them with riches"; for the second hundred it thought, "I will be so grateful I will make them rich and give them a magnificent castle"; for the third hundred it thought, "I will be so grateful I will do all that, and make them a king as well". But when nobody came it got angry, and for the final hundred years it thought, I will kill whoever frees me because they made me suffer so long. The fisherman is deathly afraid of this powerful and angry spirit and pleads for his life, but the Jinni will not change its mind. Realizing that he cannot talk the Jinni out of its brutal vengeance, the fisherman tricks it. He marvels that such an enormous being could fit in such a tiny bottle, and asks that the Jinni demonstrate how it was done before he is killed. Flattered by the fisherman's compliments, the Jinni goes back into the bottle. The fisherman re-corks it, and throws it back into the sea.

To me this fairy tale works so well because the child hearing it can put them self in either role depending upon what they need from the story.

The Jinni can be the child who is dropped off at daycare and spends the day thinking, "I will be so happy when my mother comes I will reward her", but when the hours pass, and the mother doesn't come the child feels deeply abandoned and thoughts of reward turn to thoughts of punishment. This interpretation allows the child to identify with this sense of anger vicariously, while ultimately teaching that bitterness leads to misfortune.

Another child might identify with the sailor, who is a small being in the control of a much larger and more powerful one, as a child is controlled by their parent. When the Jinni's story turns from talk of reward to suddenly punishment, it is how a child might see a parent who can transform from kind and giving to frightening and terrible. When the sailor outwits the genie, it says to the child, this is your power, you are small and weak, but you can still outwit your parents, which every child delights in doing.

In developing my film, I consciously tried to come up with a story that would allow for this dual interpretation.

In the initial encounter in the forest I chose the "tracked muddy footprints" accusation both because it was the sort of complaint a parent would make, and also because it would seem a very unjust accusation, and children are quite sensitive to being unjustly accused, even when they are at fault.



Figure 6. Still from movie: Amanda and Troll.

The Troll and Amanda have a head-butting battle of wills over the accusation, and the argument between them is of the irrational 'yes you did', 'no I didn't' kind, which typifies the sort of argument a child has when it is angry and in this the Troll is acting like the child as well. Amanda is not equipped to win in this manner because the troll is so much louder and more powerful.

Throughout the story, the Troll treats his different parts as though they are separate individuals, he asks his ears what they hear, tells his legs to follow Amanda, and consults his brain and stomach when trying to decide what to do with her. I did this

for humorous reasons, but also to suggest a fractured psyche whose parts are out of balance, or not properly integrated.

When the troll eats Amanda she is metaphorically consumed by her own dark, angry, negative thoughts.

In the belly, I see Amanda as being in the darkest possible place, the pit of despair with no hope of escape, as a child might feel like they will never emerge from an angry mood. I had her react the way she did because I have seen the same in my son. In the times when he has become really angry he will take this sort of martyr position of, "you wanted this, well I'll show you" and then he settles in to almost cherish his anger.

Generally what gets him out of such a mood is a combination of getting bored by it, and being coaxed out of it. So I had her get bored of waiting in the stomach, and when she is in the head it is the voice of the mother that calls her back to the light.

I saw the movement from the stomach to the head as being symbolic of the child growing out of being ruled by gut emotion and to the more mature, rational thinking stage of development, and so when she outwits the troll by fooling it into thinking she is his brain she has shown her maturity.



Figure 7. Character expressions.



Figure 8. Original character design: Amanda.

Chapter 4: Relationship to My Previous Work

As I mentioned before, I chose this project in order to push my work in a direction that is not naturally comfortable for me, but in many ways it is also an extension of my previous work.

One theme that repeats frequently in my films is the collision of the fantastic with the mundane.

In one of my earliest films, *Fettered*, fantasy meets reality with the age-old dream of human flight. An Icarus-like character constructs a pair of enormous wings in order to fulfill his desire to fly free, but in the cramped confines of his tiny apartment the wings are not a means of escape, but a burden that makes the simplest task next to impossible.

Struggling to function in a small dirty kitchen, he can barely turn around. Simply opening the fridge presents a major difficulty, and dishes are knocked from the counter and smash to the floor constantly.

His dreams turn to ashes as the paper wings catch fire on the gas stove.

My film *Grace Eternal* was based on a newspaper story from the mid-nineties, and continued with this theme to explore the fantasy of immortal life. An elderly woman dies alone in her apartment, and yet unexpectedly her life is extended by the mundane intervention of automated technology. All of her bills are withdrawn automatically from her bank account, and her pension checks are deposited in the same manner. In this way her life is extended electronically for four years beyond the time her body expires.

Another later film I made was an animated adaptation of the Nikolai Gogol short story, *The Nose*. In the story, a mid-level civil servant, Major Kovalev, wakes one morning to find that his nose has completely vanished from his face. While seeking a solution, he encounters it entering a church dressed up in the uniform of a much more high-ranking official. When he confronts it, the Nose insists that they have never met, and insinuates that Kovalev is mentally unstable. The Nose then vanishes when Kovalev turns his back.

Kovalev looks for a remedy to his situation amongst the bureaucracy, but these mundane channels are ill equipped to respond to a problem of such a fantastic nature.

Amanda builds upon my previous work by continuing to explore the conjunction of fantasy and reality, but in a form that is aimed at children, and makes use of conventional narrative film language.

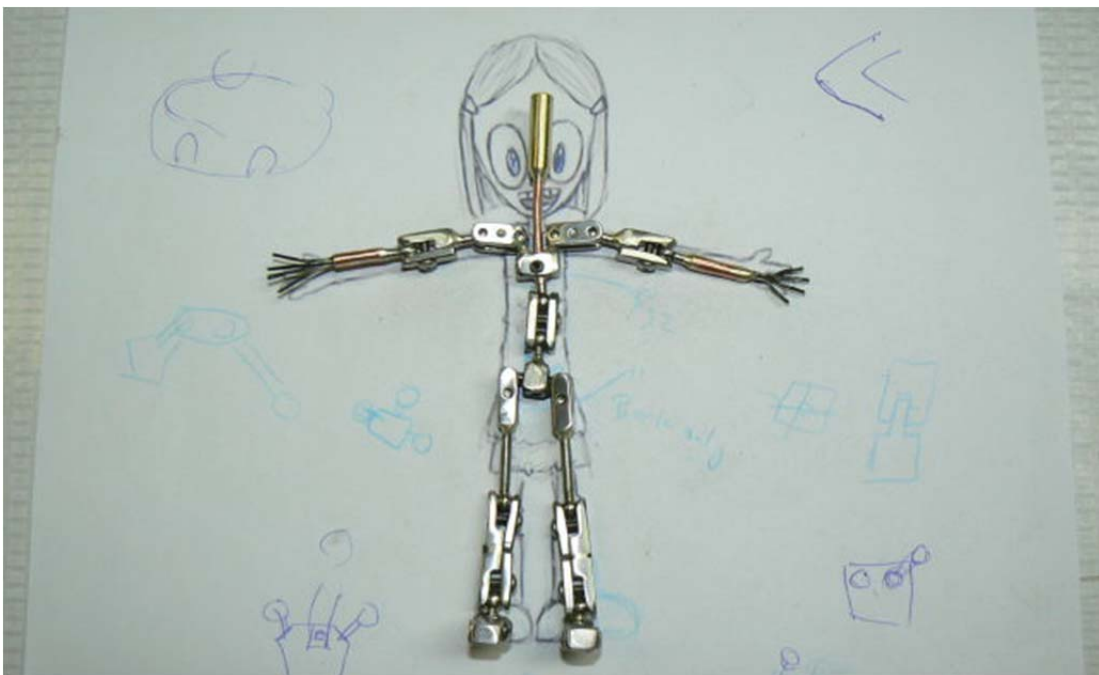


Figure 9. Ball and socket armature for Amanda.

Chapter 5: Film and Literary Influences

The basic storyline of a child leaving their normal life and travelling to a fantasy world and then having to find their way back home is a common one in children's literature, appearing in everything from the collections of the Brother's Grimm to *The Wizard of Oz*.

One of the most well known examples is *The Lion the Witch and The Wardrobe*, by C.S. Lewis. It was adapted into a movie, although I don't think the movie had much influence on me. The book however has enormous power with deeply layered meaning.

I am also a great fan of the films of the Japanese director, Hayao Miyazaki, particularly *Spirited Away*, and *My Neighbour Totoro*. *Spirited Away* follows this form very clearly, with a young girl, Chihiro, whose parents are transformed into pigs in a haunted amusement park, and she is transported to the spirit world where she is forced to work until she is able to find a way to save her parents, and return home.

My Neighbour Totoro deviates from this pattern in that the girls in the story are not transported to a fantasy world, but rather the fantasy world intersects intrudes upon the real world. It is perhaps the subtlest of these films, as much of the film simply deals with day-to-day life.

While I did not encounter it before I began this project, the Cartoon Network miniseries, *Over the Garden Wall*, is firmly in this genre, and uses the conventions of fairy tales perhaps more than any of them. It follows two brothers, Wirt and Greg, and Greg's frog, Jason Funderberker as they travel lost through the dark woods and into the unknown as they try to make their way back home. It is quite remarkable

in its ability to mix surrealism, humor, horror, and numerous literary and film allusions with fairy tale motifs that are both strange and familiar.

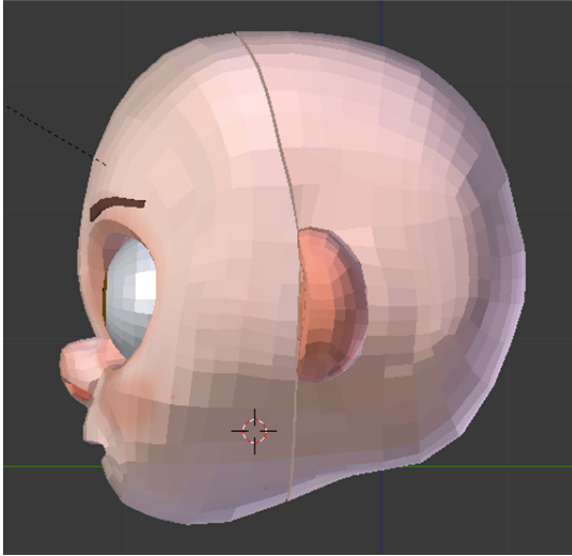


Figure 10. CGI modeled head in preparation for 3D printing.



Figure 11. 3D printed replacement faces.

Chapter 6: The Use of Stereo 3D

In developing this film one of the decisions I made was to shoot in stereo 3D.

I chose to do so for a couple of reasons. One was that I wished to push myself technically in new directions, and as a technology I have been interested in stereo 3D for quite a long time.

The second reason is that, although stereo film aims to replicate the way we experience the world more accurately than 2D, I find rather counter-intuitively, that it often feels more unreal, or perhaps more accurately hyper real, in the way that hyper realistic painting or sculpture can feel unnatural, and consequently more disturbing than similar works that are more abstract. I think the sculptural works of Evan Penny are a great example of this effect. A four-foot tall sculpture of a baby's face by Henry Moore might be impressive, but the same by Evan Penny is uncanny.

This uncanny and disturbing quality would seem to lend itself very well to a fairytale story in a fantasy setting.

Although I am very attracted by the technology, and effect of 3D film, in practice I generally find it to be disappointing. I believe the reason for this is because it is rarely chosen because it makes artistic sense, but rather because it makes financial sense. Quite simply, a distributor can charge more for a ticket to a 3D film than a

regular film. As a consequence, the 3D is often an afterthought rather than integral to the production. Thus, producers rarely take advantage of the strengths of 3D, nor do they make efforts to avoid the pitfalls that cause problems in 3D.

Basic Technical Explanation of Stereo 3D

Taking two images from slightly different perspectives creates the illusion of three-dimensionality. When they are projected back for the audience, specialized glasses are used so that the left eye of the viewer can only see the left image, and the right eye can only see the right image. These two images are fused in the mind of the viewer, creating the perception of three dimensionality.

In live action, two separate cameras are used so the two images are captured simultaneously, but since the subject in a stop motion film is still, it is possible to use one camera and slide it from the left to right position between captures.

This distance between the two cameras is known as the interaxial distance, and depending how far that distance is, the illusion of depth can be increased or decreased.

The alignment of the two images can be adjusted to alter where a screen object appears in space. The part of the picture where the two images line up will be right at the screen. This is known as the convergence point. Anything behind that point

will recede back into the screen, and anything in front of it will emerge from the screen out into the theatre. By shifting one image to left or right, that convergence point can be moved forward or back.

Production Design for 3D

One reason to be designing a film particularly for 3D is that techniques that work well in 2D often don't work as well in 3D, and vice versa. In 2D it is often a strength to design your film in a very clean, graphic fashion, which allows important things to stand out and be easily separated from one another. This might be enhanced by using a shallow depth of field, which separates the subject from the background and guides the eye of the audience to what the director wishes them to see.

These techniques work against stereo 3D however. A very graphic image doesn't give the information required for the brain to easily interpret the 3D effect. Large flat surfaces without detail are particularly problematic, since without some sort of surface detail they will appear to line up exactly, and anytime an object appears to line up in both eyes, the brain will place it at the level of the screen. Thus when an actor is standing in front of a blank wall, the wall may appear to be closer to the camera than the actor.

Because of this effect, a frame that is busy and cluttered is actually far easier to interpret in 3D than a very graphic frame. Put simply, the more depth cues you

provide to the viewer the more information they are given to help the brain to interpret the image.

In designing the swamp set for *Amanda*, I sought to take advantage of this by filling the set with a confusion of branches and twigs. In the stomach however, I chose to deliberately break this rule. I did this partly because I wanted to increase her isolation, and the sense that she is in a very dark place with little islands surrounded by darkness, and partly because I wanted to use this opportunity to really explore 3D, and I felt like I needed to break the rules in order to better understand them, and how to push them.

Another compositional technique that works well in 2D but creates problems in 3D is the placement of objects in the near foreground.

When projected, the distance between an object in the left image and the same object in the right image cannot be greater than the space between the viewer's eyes, taking into account their distance from the screen. If the viewer's eyes cannot look either in a converging or parallel gaze and line up both objects, the effort to have their eyes diverge will cause headaches. When this occurs, the image is said to be *diplopic*. The reason this affects objects in the foreground is that the point where the two images converge is the plane of the screen, and the further one moves in front or behind that plane, the greater the divergence.

Shots where the background extends into the far distance can also be problematic for the same reason, although less so.

From the perspective of stop-motion animation, one of the greatest differences between production design in 2D and 3D is that you have to throw out many of the tricks you use in 2D. The space of your production is the same as the space the viewer in the theatre will see, so if you try to cut corners by using a painted backdrop for your background for example, your audience will know immediately that it is flat, and placed a few feet behind your characters rather than receding off into the distance.

Camera Work for 3D Film

As you must change the way you design for 3D, so must you change the way you shoot?

A predatory bird, such as an owl, moves its head from side to side in order to get a better sense of the distance of its prey in a landscape, similarly, camera movement assists the audience to interpret the 3D space. To this end, I have tried to incorporate as much camera movement as my schedule would allow.

This is not a big difference from how one might shoot a 2D film where one might liberally employ camera movement to add emotional tension or for any number of

other reasons. So while this is not particularly a departure from the way you might shoot a 2D film, it has an additional effect in 3D film.

There are camera techniques that do not however work that well in 3D.

One that I mentioned earlier is shallow focus. Viewing a 3D film is somewhat akin to entering any 3D environment, and while your first impulse is to look at the subject, your second impulse is to explore the space. If a viewer lets their gaze wander about the 3D space only to encounter that it is mostly out of focus, it has a tendency to cause headaches as their eyes strain to focus objects that will always remain blurry.

To accommodate this problem, I generally shot with a very tiny aperture to keep as much of the scene in focus as possible. This tended to go against my natural inclination, which is to use shallow depth of field.

Fast cutting is also problematic in 3D. The issue here is that unlike 2D, where the viewer's eyes are always focused on the screen plane, the viewer of a 3D film will shift their focus, depending upon where the subject sits in three-dimensional space. If you cut between a close-up of a figure that is positioned in front of the screen, to a distant subject situated in the far background, the viewers eyes need to shift as they would in the real world, with the one difference being that on an edit that shift is

instantaneous. If this happens a few times it is not too much of a problem, but if is persistent throughout the film it will cause eyestrain and headaches.

To deal with this I tried to limit the number of times that I made cuts that would require a big jump from foreground to background, but also limiting the number of edits in general and opting for shots of a longer duration instead.

A further difficulty I encountered was how to make the troll seem as large as possible in comparison to Amanda. This would be easy to accomplish in 2D, simply by positioning him closer to the camera, thereby forcing the perspective, but in a stereo film you can tell where things are in 3D space, so this is not really possible. The shot where the troll first appears was one where I particularly wanted to emphasize his size, but because he stands up behind her, this was a challenge. In 2D, I might have positioned him to be just behind Amanda so that the distance in actual space was much shorter than it appeared on camera. Barring this, I experimented with an alternate solution that relied on an unusual quality of 3D which, counter intuitively, is that things can seem larger the farther away they are.

The principle works like this. Imagine a two-dimensional image where the bottom third of the screen is a mountain range, and positioned above it is a 747 airplane, which covers half the width of the screen. Because the image is flat we cannot judge where the airplane truly is in space, but because we know how large a 747 is in real

life, we have no difficulty in determining how large the plane is, even though it is much smaller than an actual 747 when it is on the screen.

Now imagine the exact same composition, in a 3D film. Depending on where the left and right images converge, the plane can be made to appear right on the screen, floating in the theatre in front of the screen, or far behind the screen, so it is closer to the range of mountains.

You might expect the airplane that is floating right in the space of the theatre in front of the audience to seem the largest, but in fact it is quite the opposite. This is because, if instead of the illusion of a three-dimensional airplane, you put an actual airplane into a theatre, floating in front of the screen it would need to be much smaller than a real 747, and looking at it you would be well aware that it was small.

If however you pushed the airplane back through the screen so that it was on a plane much closer to the mountain range, it could now be made to appear to be much larger than a real 747. This is because, even though our brain perceives it to be much farther away, it hasn't shrunk, but instead takes up the same amount of space on the screen as the one that was floating within the theatre.

So using this principle I solved my problem in the following manner. I selected an interaxial distance that maximized the depth in the shot, and then set the

convergence of the left and right image so that the troll appeared to be deep within the frame where he is perceived to be larger than he actually is.

Another way I accentuated the difference in size between my two characters was by changing the interaxial distances when I was shooting their POV shots of one another. The interaxial distance simulates the distance between the left and right eye of the viewer. If you increase that distance then it gives the impression that the viewer is giant, and the subject becomes miniaturized. If you reduce the interaxial distance, then the viewer feels small and the subject seems giant. Using this I endeavored to shoot Amanda with a large interaxial distance to make her seem small, and vice versa with the troll to make him larger.

There are limits to how this can be used though, as changing the interaxial distance also changes how great the feeling of depth in the shot is, and so miniaturizing or enlarging the character may have negative consequences on another aspect of the 3D. In the end it often comes down to juggling a few variables to find the compromise between maximizing the effects you want while minimizing those you don't.

Stereo 3D as an Artistic Tool

In the end, however, if stereo 3D is simply adding technical complexity then it has little value, so what does it add to a film artistically?

I mentioned earlier the sense of a “heightened reality” which I believe 3D can create, another thing that I believe it adds is a greater weight, or presence to characters.

This is particularly true in close-ups. One of the films with the most masterful use of stereo 3D is *Pina*, by Wim Wenders. He did a number of interesting things with the technology, but the thing that struck me as the most powerful part of the film was when he simply shot medium close-ups of the dancers standing in front of a neutral screen looking into camera, and then stepping forward so that they moved from behind the screen into the space of the theatre. Feeling the three-dimensional volume of the dancers gave them a presence and intensity that they would not have had as 2D portraits.

I attempted to use this effect during the first encounter between Amanda and the troll. The troll leans forward towards the camera. In 3D he emerges from the screen, out into the space of the audience. My aim was to use this effect to make him even more threatening and intimidating.

3D can also be useful as a way of subtly altering the mood, or emotion in a way that sits just outside conscious awareness. One of the ways you can affect this is by changing how flat or deep the image appears. Using this I tended to slightly flatten

out the image when Amanda is at her emotional lows, and deepen the image when there is more excitement or drama.

I also made the decision to shoot the parts of the film, which are set in Amanda's fantasy world much deeper and rounder than the scene in the real world, which I flattened to the point where it is almost two-dimensional. I chose to do this to give the feeling that her emotional, fantasy world carries more weight, or is more real, than the real world.



Figure 12. Sketchup model of swamp set.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

In considering the completed film, I think there is a fair amount that works for me, but I would not be honest if I didn't acknowledge a lot of shortcomings.

I think while there are parts of the story which work fairly well, overall I don't believe it is as strong as it should be. This is both a result of practical considerations, as well as my own creative shortcomings as a writer, which I still struggle with, notwithstanding how much I think I have improved as result of my time at York.

The major practical consideration was time and money. I think the story I chose needed to be longer in order to properly set up the relationship between Amanda and her mother, to present the sort of personal struggle and growth necessary to make Amanda's arc meaningful and believable, and to really recreate the primal power of fairy tales. I frequently found myself having to cut too close to the bone simply to keep the film to a manageable scale. I also entered production with a script that I knew was not really ready, but with studio space, equipment and actors waiting, I felt I needed to proceed or risk the whole thing falling apart. This has given me some insight into why animated series are often so poorly written, since the financing depends upon keeping to a certain timeline, and delaying production over a bad script might result in the whole project collapsing.

In retrospect I might have overcome these practical difficulties by not trying to create a film with the three-act structure of a feature, but rather taking advantage of the collective knowledge of an existing fairytale. This wouldn't have required me to tell the entire story, but instead allowed me to focus on a pivotal scene. For example, if a film started with a girl in red entering a bedroom to find a wolf dressed like an old woman, the audience already brings enough knowledge to the story that they don't need to be told how we got there.

Unfortunately, to some degree this overly ambitious project also limited my ability to really master the 3D technology. I did some testing and experimentation at the beginning of the project, but once shooting began in earnest I no longer was able to composite the 3D shots with any regularity and so couldn't really adjust my approach based upon my results.

I think creatively, I needed to maintain much more focus on the theme of a child mastering negative emotions in order to mature so that it would drive the creative decisions in the film. I also don't think I did a great job of coming up with scenarios that would dramatize the inner conflicts. (It turns out that having a character become bored is not inherently dramatic. Who could have predicted.)

If I take any lesson from this experience, it is that the script is the most vital element of a narrative film. Production value might add to a good script, but it is no cure for a weak one.

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