

Pixar animation studios' up essay sample



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Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios' *Up*, the popular animated film from 2009 grabs your attention from the very beginning with its outstanding creativity and vividness throughout every scene. Characters are brought to life through witty characterizations and fun voices. A meaningful story is felt, bringing you all the way to the fairy tale ending. *Up* is an imaginative and adventurous journey, taking you through the difficulties of life, building of friendships, and making right decisions, all contributing to attaining true happiness.

“ Nominated for 92 awards, winning 55, including 2 Oscar Awards for Best Achievement in Music Written for Motion Pictures and Best Animated Feature Film of the Year “ *Up* is simply incredible (IMDb). *Up* mastered the idea of making an animated film enjoyable for all ages, whether child, teenager, or adult. Action, adventure, love, and laughs are all parts contributing to the film as a whole, making it fun for anyone. Good morals and metaphors can be seen throughout, relating them to parts of life but in a creative and imaginative manner keeping the entertainment levels high from the very start.

Up begins with the heartfelt love story of Carl and Ellie as young children meeting in the old house where they began their adventures together. As kids, they share characteristics of curiosity, optimism, and fun loving souls. Carl and Ellie shared a long and happy life with a desire for more adventure than they were really able to achieve. This beautiful love story is then torn to pieces as Carl is faced with the death of Ellie and is forced to move on with his long-lived life. “ Carl becomes overwhelmed by his grief and the burden of a life that to him now seems incomplete. It would be so easy for him to

give up – to let the developers take over his home – but Carl stubbornly stays in the house filled with their shared memories while feeling increasingly despondent and grumpy” (Evely, 62-70). These strong feelings of how upset he seems to be are truly felt by the animation and actions of shown.

As he moves on, his day-to-day routine is stagnant, lacking in life or even much care. His life feels pointless, as he hangs on to the past from when his one love was still with him. Anger and heartache are brought out in Carl when a construction worker unknowingly damages the mailbox carefully painted by Ellie in the past. When this happens, Carl strikes at the man out of pure instinct, holding on to what he cares about most, the memories of Ellie. Because of his actions, Carl is then required to leave his home and live in a retirement home. But just as his life seems to have completely ended, Carl comes up with the bright idea to save his home and Ellie’s dream at the same time, to fly his house with thousands of balloons to their childhood dream, Paradise Falls. But while his unimaginable dream seems to be in motion as he sails through the sky, he is soon awakened by the knock of a young wilderness explorer 70 years younger than he.

Russell, voiced by Jordan Nagai, is an 8-year-old wilderness explorer trying to earn his last badge of assisting the elderly. Carl, being an old man himself, turns out to be the perfect target. Ending up on Carl’s porch while flying through the sky, Russell is fearfully caught outside and Carl is reluctantly forced to let the adolescent boy in. Showing more of his stubborn and grumpy personality, Carl dislikes the presence of the boy, only being a distraction to his journey. A barrier is felt between the two mainly coming from Carl’s negative vibes contrary to Russell’s fun-loving persona. Christine

Evelyn points out that “ the animators have not chosen a realist style of animation, but instead have used a caricatured style that highlights key features, almost making them larger than life. You might notice that Carl is a rather square-shaped character who is slow and steady, while Russell is more circle-shaped and able to move around fluidly and quickly” (62-70). This choice of animation works well to drastically reveal the moods the characters are in and show their true personalities while also adding a comical twist. Along with these two main characters, other playful characters are seen and each have their own type of characteristic portrayed by their actions during the film. Each character has its own story and difficulties to face.

Like many animated films, *Up* has a battle of good versus evil. As Carl and Russell make the quick journey to South America, they then struggle to pass through the jungle, pulling the floating house with them to the exact cliff Ellie had dreamed of. But along the way, Charles Muntz (voiced by Christopher Plummer), also Carl's childhood hero, and his talking dogs try to get in the way. Earlier in the film Russell found a Snipe bird and named him Kevin, becoming his new friend. But Kevin had always been a target for Charles as he has long searched to capture him.

As this twist is added to the story, hostility and action becomes more predominant as Charles tries his best to take the bird. Charles and his dogs, equipped with collars to help them talk, are shown as the evil ones in the film challenging the good of Carl and Russell. These evil characters are seen as doing what is wrong, evoking high emotions against them. As the battle gets more intense, another character is brought into the picture, Dug. Dug is

a dog that was originally a part of Charles' wolf pack of devious dogs, but eventually turns to become good, helping Carl and Russell to escape. Yet another relationship is built as Carl, Russell, Dug, and Kevin work together to get away from the peril lurking behind them. Throughout the movie Carl is the character that gains the most from the adventure and building of friendships.

The passing of his beloved wife causes Carl to hate life, keeping only to himself rather than making the best of things. Even when he begins his journey to South America and becomes accompanied by Russell, he rejects the boy's positive and charismatic presence, much like that of his own childhood. But after spending more and more time with him, Carl learns to love and care for Russell. Although when the choice is brought to him whether to save himself and his house or to save Kevin as Charles makes him decide, he chooses what he cares most about, the house. Russell is heartbroken and decides to try and save Kevin himself while Charles flies away in his blimp. Finally making it to the dream destination, Carl feels a gaping hole inside of him, not filled by his original goal. He then realizes that he needs to let go of the past and can do so by clearing out all of the possessions in his house, making it light enough to fly after the blimp to save Russell. He then becomes the hero of the story, giving all that he has left to save his newfound friend.

A feeling of excitement is brought out through the fast paced music, this being the climax of the film. A battle of epic proportions met with humor is fought as the two old men duel it out on the blimp ending with good defeating evil. Facing the difficulties of the journey, Carl ends up gaining

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much more than he expected. The challenges and things he endures can be related to happenings of real life. Death is something we all will face in our lifetimes and can be very emotional. Up is able to capture this feeling extremely well in only a few short minutes at the beginning of the film. Every emotion is felt in this tale, from happiness to despair. Easily related to, Carl goes through things that we all do. He falls in love, lives his happy and perfect life with typical hardships coming throughout. Along with great dialogue emotion capturing voices, the visual effects were beautifully done.

The story is even more vividly brought out by colorful imagery. Every scene is visually interesting, keeping your attention throughout, especially when seen in 2D. "The colors - especially those of the balloons and the plumage of a giant bird - are bright and cheerful, and will almost certainly lose something when diminished by the 3D glasses, so there's at least one compelling argument to see this in 2D. Regardless of how it's watched, Up showcases the fine animation that has become Pixar's hallmark. It is not as visionary as what we were presented with in WALL-E, but it puts to shame DreamWorks' Monsters vs. Aliens, where the obsession with 3D resulted in other shortcomings" (James Berardinelli). No matter who you are, Up will be one of the most incredible animated films to ever be seen. The realistic backgrounds are blended nicely with the caricatured characters. Not much is left for imagination as scenes are portrayed skillfully such as in the wonderfully made landscapes of South America.

The jungles are full of colorful greens, helping you to feel as though you were there. At the 82nd Academy Awards, Up took home the award for Best Animated Feature, and even received a nomination for Best Picture, and

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rightfully so. " Having an estimated budget of \$175, 000, 000 to make the film, Up was able to gross \$731, 342, 744 worldwide, as of November 25, 2011" (Rotten Tomatoes). Obviously, audiences from all around have demonstrated their love for the film, contributing to its success. " Up tells a story as tickling to the imagination as the magical animated films of my childhood, when I naively thought that because their colors were brighter, their character outlines more defined and their plots simpler, they were actually more realistic than regular films" (Ebert) Peter Travers explains in an article a view felt by most who see the film telling how " the movie is wonderfully funny and touching (props to the gawky hero of a bird Russell names Kevin), but what's really exhilarating are the risks it takes, all set to Michael Giacchino's ardent, award-caliber score" (Rolling Stone). The award from the Oscars for Best Achievement in Music Written for Motion Pictures, Original Score was granted to Michael Giacchino, definitely being deserved. Harmonizing nicely with the animation, the musical scores help you set the mood of the scene, letting emotions run wild, whether in depression or joy.

A truly heart-wrenching ending shows how Carl is able to achieve his newfound goal of true happiness. " Carl now sits with Russell and his dog, able now to reinvent the world of paternity via the eating of ice cream" (Walter Metz 78) People should care about what this simple, yet moving tale has to show for because it relates to each and every one of our lives in one way or another. Carl faces the worst of difficulties life brings, and struggles to get over the past, but in the end realizes that we must build friendships and make right decisions to achieve happiness. " Pixar lets smart, quirky artists indulge their creativity," (All Movie) helping to exemplify the true

nature of us as human beings. With all things considered, Up was truly an inspirational movie, accompanied by lighthearted laughs along the way. This film has effectively shown how easy it can be to give up, but when you choose to do the right thing, even if it means straying from your original goal, you will find happiness.