‘animation’ though some of them are considered

‘ Animation’ is a term that is used to define a broad range of practices in today’s world. It takes form in different genres capturing imaginations and we can see that animation is present everywhere from big screens to small screens (Mobile phones). The idea of Illusion of motion created through the incremental movement of forms or drawings displayed sequentially as a motion picture is where the world of animation began to emerge and expand. Animation began with 2D animation that typically employs a series of hand-drawn images or painted images, Stop motion animation that consists of pictures of puppets or other objects that are modified in position or form of movement over time and 3D animation which is digitally produced with images simulating deep space. For centuries, people have made many contributions and inventions to the development of motion pictures.

Some of these inventions or techniques survived until the 20th century while the others had a relatively shorter existence. Even though some of them are considered to be a failure at the time, I believe that these techniques were a part of forming a bridge to what animation is today. Animation can give life to any being which no other art form can. This made animation interesting and unique. Animation was developing its own aesthetic language with each technique invented.

With each development, however, Disney moved further from the plasmatic flexibility and started to coerced the animation form into a neo-realist practice. Animation now had the power to transport the viewer to endless possibilities. As animation began to grow as an art, the expectation of what animation was began to increase. Even though there were many people and companies producing animation in various fields, Disney was the one

company that established what animation is and raised the standards to a higher level with each work they produced. Disney’s 9 old men came up with the 12 basic principles of animation that made understanding of animation a bit easier.

In olden days 100s of animators had to work on a single production with expensive and bulky equipments. Studios had very little room for experimentation and most of the animation productions did not make money. The definition of what animation was capable of seemed to be unattainable without a good budget. All animated movies are built on and driven by passion.

It takes more than 4 years to create a 90-minute movie with around 130, 000 frames. Played in over 45 languages, regardless of the country and culture, the audience enjoy every bit of the movie and the theatre is filled with the universal language of laughter and emotions. Illustrators back in those days were panicking when photography came into existance because that was replacing the work of an illustrator and getting replaced with this technology was easy as technology started evolving. In animation, there is no pre-visualized set of rules and different kinds of movies can be made with extraordinary visuals. Technology has now created magical doors for the artists by providing a number of tools that allow the artists to elicit emotions in a much more realistic way and they can now create a stunning world in 3D with things like sparkling fire, splashing water, flowing hair that was very difficult or almost impossible in the earlier days.

With new softwares developing every day, animation is now seeing a new age of accessibility and innovation. It can now be created and used by everyone around the world. As a result of this, the big studios are forced to adapt and innovate to compete with the new wave of creative freedom born with the age of technology.

In today’s world, no matter who you are or where you are from, you have access to the unlimited possibilities of storytelling. Technology will develop further and further each day becoming more powerful and affordable. With technology forever evolving, it appears that animation is at the best it has ever been. It is now a golden age for animation with more possibilities to give life to one’s imagination. Will there be a point when computers can no longer cope up with the extreme details? The 20th century introduced something that revolutionized humanity forever and of course, animation. That is the ‘ internet’.

It changed lives and a whole new world of excitement was beginning. Internet increased the international distributions, it increased the reach of software to everybody. Thus, animation started to reach the audience through different modes and softwares. There was no need to rely on big studios.

As technology evolved, there were more and more studious coming up with excellent work in animation. Animation can now be created with just softwares instead of things like scanning papers, scanners, ink, paint which were essential for the animation on olden days. When animators are creating character movements through skethes or softwares, they often use a

reference video footage to study how someone is acting out a scene or movement of a character’s body. They even look at themselves in a mirror to create apt facial expressions. Animators have to keyframe poses and fill the inbetweens to make the character move. To automate this process, animators looked up to motion capture. Bio-kinetic researchers like Simon Fraser University’s Tom Calvert were breaking new ground with mechanical suits that captures body language. With the help of technology, this process got better and better with every little betterment added by different artists and technicians.

An early animation exploiting that tech is the infamous, creepy Dozo music video from pioneering firm Kleiser-Walczak. In the early days, mocap was a studio-only process where actors with tight suits were alone in the sets surrounded by various special cameras and lights. The movie ‘ Avatar’ introduced a new technique of “ performance capture” which allowed multiple performers and read facial expressions and lip movement of all those actors present on the sets.

Also, games like L. A. Noire also improved drastically with respect to the realism by combining the facial features and the full-body capture. Meanwhile, the making of the movie ‘ The Lord Of The Rings’ brought mocap out of the studio and onto the sets by allowing pioneering mocap actor Andy Serkis to interact with other actors as the character ‘ Gollum’.

The on-set performance capture which included the face. This had set the norm for creating feature films with digital characters. Motion capture came

into existance recently. It is a technique of recording actions of human actors and using that information, animate a digital character model in 2D or 3D computer animation. The amount of animation data that can be produced within a given time is extremely high when compared to traditional animation techniques. This contributes to cost effectiveness and also meeting production deadlines.

In this technique, movements of one or more actors are sampled many times per second. the techniques used in early days used images from many cameras to calculate the 3D positions. The purpose of motion capture is often to record the movements of the actor and the visual appearance. The data is then mapped to a 3D model such that the model performs the same actions as the actor. Optical systems work by tracking the position markers or features in 3D and it assembles the data into an approximation of the actor’s motion. Active systems use markers that light up or blink distinctively, while passive systems use inert objects like white balls or just painted dots (the latter is often used for face capture). Markerless systems use algorithms from match-moving software to track distinctive features, like an actor’s clothing or nose, instead of markers.

Once captured, motion is then mapped onto a virtual “ skeleton” of the animated character using software like Autodesk’s MotionBuilder. The result? Animated characters that move like real-life performers. It’s difficult to predict how an actor’s movement will translate to an animated character, so “ virtual cinematography,” developed by James Cameron for Avatar, is often used.

In a nutshell, that shows the digital character moving with the actor in real time — on a virtual set — so the director can see a rough version of the “ performance.” That involves plenty of math, but computers and graphics cards are now fast enough to pull it off. The video below from Weta Digital for The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug illustrates the process.

This process may be contrasted with the older technique of rotoscoping which consumed a lot of time. The technology cannot yet accurately record the nuances of human behavior without the intervention of animators. But Spielberg appears to have made animators a more integral part of this process. Instead of demanding the animators to make the motion capture data look ealistic, he allowed them a degree of freedom.

In LA Times interview, he said, “ I can underwrite or overwrite a performance and through the animators put something into a performance that even the actors didn’t bring to the bay.” This shows that the animators play a role in creating the performance like as in traditional animation. His attempt to combine motion capture and animation was a huge stepping stone towards success but not entirely successful. The photorealism of the design are amazing but there is a disturbing behavior of the characters. Watching a pliable, squash-and-stretch cartoon character like Daffy Duck wrapped up in a spinning plane propeller and spit out is funny; watching the photoreal Captain Haddock perform that same gag in Tintin looks awkward and uncomfortable. This discordance between design and performance will be ironed out when the technology is placed in the hands of experienced animation directors who more fully understand how the medium works.

From ink on paper to reality Story-tellers in all media know that a sure indicator of audience involvement is the degree to which audience identifies with a story’s character. COMICSComics contain series of drawings that express ideas often combined with text or any other visual information. The birth of this beautiful combination of ink and paper began as a small part of newspapers and magazines and eventually led to having an own book for comics. The first appearance of Tinitn was on 10th of January 1929.

A Belgian newspaper named Le Vingtième Siècle published comic strips of tinitn in French. Eventually, the series began to flourish and it published in the leading newspaper of Belgium. This led to having a separate magazine for tintin. The series has been admired for its clean, expressive drawings. Herges combines iconic characters with unusually realistic backgrounds and the plots are well-researched with a variety of genres which had the readers hooked to their books. No non-iconic abstractions. The technique used to create this comic back in those days was famous. Comic strips were drawn using brushes with ink on plain papers.

Initially, it started as a balck and white comic. With the development of technology, colors became a huge part of visual ideas and the comics were redrawn with color images. Tintin is an abstract style of comic where the images drawn are drawn from reality and yet are far from reality. But the readers accept them as real characters and involve in the story. The mind has no trouble in accepting the characters and the scenarios even though they look cartoony. The good thing about comic books are that they let us explore the world of that specific story in our own ways.

We don’t just observe the cartoon, we become it. Likewise, in the scene chosen above, the readers do not just see the pictures, but feel it and hear it through their own ways. The combination of the background and the characters allows the readers to mask themselves as the characters and enter the magical world. When cartoons are used throughout a story, the world of that story may seem to pulse with life. This specific scene that I have chosen from this comic is where Tintin and Captain Hadock escape from the ship by taking a boat and an aeroplane that later crashes. This scenes takes up almost 9 pages of the comic book. These pictures in a sequence are an excellent communication tool that is easily understood by anybody. The use of icons and symbols Here, we see three characters that are escaping on a boat and are in the middle of the ocean.

We can notice various perspectives of the waves the readers can imagine the scene as it is, masking themselves as the characters. Then the boat catches fire and flips and all the 3 characters fall into the water and hold the boat to float on it. Here the readers can listen to the audio of the seaplane that flies above them just by seeing the symbol ‘ Rat-tat-tat’. Symbols help us understand and feel the scenes better. They then fly the aeroplane into a thunderstorm which is understood by the icon of clouds and rain.

The plane the then seen in different angles which shows that there is no control over the plane which then crashes on the ground and blasts. Even the bubbles on Tintin’s head convey a meaning. They show that the character is scared and in shock. Here, we see various symbols and icons which make us understand that this is how it caught on fire or coughed up smoke or rain. Though these are just ink on paper, they make us go through

the whole journey with just icons and symbols which makes the comic strip come to life. The TV seriesThe Tintin comics spread wide and sold 230 million copies soon and was soon translated to over 70 different languages. People everywhere loved Tintin. As the technology began to evolve, the medium of presenting a story also evolved.

Very soon, Tintin started as a 2D TV series directed by Stephen Bernasconi which adapted the stories from the comic and the series adhered closely to the original books to such an extent that some of the frames were taken directly from the original books to the screen. The series chose a constant style of art unlike the books which have the artistic style eventually changing over the course of 47 years, during which Herge’s style developed. This technique, unlike the comic, requires many more people working on the same story to produce the right output. Traditional animation which is also called as cel animation or hand-drawn animation, is a process used for most animated films during the 20th century. Each frame present in a traditionally animated film are nothing but the photographs of drawings which are drawn on paper. Each drawing differs slightly from the one before it such that it creates an illusion of movement. The drawings are then photocopied or traced onto a transparent acetate sheets called cels.

These were filled in with paints with an assigned color or tone on the side opposite the line drawings. Once that is completed, the character cels are photographed one by one against a background that has already been painted by a rostrum camera onto motion picture film. This is a labourious process of drawing each frame and having background artists and artists to paint the frames, a person to work on the camera angles and many more.

The traditional animation process started to become obsolete during the 21st century. With today’s technology, animators’ drawings and the backgrounds are either scanned into or drawn directly into a computer system. There are various software programs that have come into existance to color the drawings and simulate camera movement and effects and to do much more work in a lesser time which is cost effective and also needs lesser labour. The comic scene that was just around 9 pages long, consumes 5 minutes for the 2D video scene. The 3D motion captureSteven Spielberg’s exemplary adaptation of the adventures of Tintin enthralled the audience once again.

This movie, unlike the 2D series has adapted 3 of the comics and woven it creatively into a single piece of story. This version of tintin has much more drama and a lot of action compared to the previous versions of the same stories. It indeed is a delight to see Spielberg play with the possibilities of the 3D technologies with amazingly impossible camera movements, scene transitions and innovative ideas. The same scene of escaping, occupies about 8 minutes of the movie. Here, the story has changed the little bit with regard to the 2 pilots and the airplane. Analysing the scene according to Barthe’s theory: A basic application of Barthe’s theory to a comic panel: Duo-dpecific comic where words and images are evenly balanced throughout the comic.

An image may convey n number of meanings. But when there is story going on as a comic, the artist should be sure to covey the right emotions to make the reader feel and understand the story. Herges has been a great artist and

the readers had no difficulty in getting involved with the characters or the stories of Tintin.

According to Roland Barthes, any image contains three different types of messages. a. Linguistic message : Barthe’s says ‘ The linguistic image is present in very image: as title, caption, accompanying press article, film dialogue, comic strip balloon’. Linguistic message has two possible function. One is the anchorage and the other is Relay. In this comic panel, we can notice a Relay linguistic message which means that both image and text act together to convey some meaning. There is a question mark and an exclamatory mark in bold inside a bubble which draws attention first.

By this, we can understand that Tintin is in shocked and confused and we are about to find out why when we move our attention to the complete panel. If there was no conversation balloon in this panel, we would not have understood the reaction of tintin. This is because the angle or perspective of this panel does not show Tintin’s face and hence we cannot decide on his reaction. Whereas with the ‘?!’ in bold, we understand that tintin is confused as to what is happening in front of him. b.

Literal or denoted message : On a literal level, we can identify all the objects in the panel and we can understand what is going on in the panel. Here, the signifier is the symbol in the bubble which is expressed by Tinitin and the signified is the scene or the idea indicated by the signifier which happens to be the fire. c. Symbolic message: The literal and symbolic messages are not separated easily.

In this panel, we can see that the boat is in the water and it has caught fire. The way the water is drawn, we can see that waves are rising behind the boat and we know that the place is an ocean and not a small river or lake. The lines around the heads of all the three characters show us the panic and confusion as what is going on. The overall composition of this panel signifies that they are stuck in the middle of the ocean and that it is a moving landscape. MOVIESemioticsAudiences read media language to understand messages. this has color, camera shots and angles, clothing, editing and the staging. Saussure suggested that there are 3 different levels on which the viewer read the media. Syntatctic level – what they can seerepresentation level – representation of character or placessymbolic level – hidden cultural meaning Barthes developed this theory further A try to analyze the scene using Barthe’s theories: