

Hybrid Mythology and Personal Nostalgia

A hybrid mythological narrative based on personal cross-cultural memories
that utilise anthropomorphism in an animated film

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Master of Art and Design
2020

This exegesis is submitted to the Auckland University of Technology for the degree of
Bachelor in Art and Design/Honours, Digital Design.

2020

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Abstract

I aim to produce a short-animated film consisting of both two-dimensional and three-dimensional components. The narrative will be based on hybrid myths, fables, and urban legends that I discovered as a child. Considering my personal experiences of moving to different countries (from New Zealand to Japan and Korea), reading various mythological tales helped me become familiar with significantly different cultural environments. Together, these experiences are significant as it relates to my sense of childhood nostalgia. I will research Greek, Korean and Japanese mythologies and incorporate their influences on symbolism which appears in my animated short film. Autobiographical experiences are used to drive the narrative of the storyline. This approach is supported with the use of anthropomorphism, through which my primary protagonist (based on an animal) is imbued with human-like qualities.

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Attestation of authorship

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my primary supervisor, Miriam Harris for supporting and sharing her knowledge during my research.

I also want to express my appreciation to Lynne Jamneck for proofreading my exegesis.

I received generous support from Chloe Biaño, who corrected the grammar of my writing.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family for supporting me during my Masters' years.

Introduction

In my Master's project, I explore multi-cultural mythological narratives and hybridise them using anthropomorphic character design to produce a two-dimensional animated film based on my childhood experiences. To achieve this, I research into how I might be able to convey to an audience, a sense of nostalgia and a child's courage, through my animated film. I also express my personal experience with language barriers and adapt to an unfamiliar culture as a child. Through this exegesis, I research the familiarity I experience when reading about different countries' myths and how nostalgia can be incorporated into an animated film.

Based on these ideas, my primary research question asks, "How can I create a hybrid mythological narrative based on personal cross-cultural memories that employ anthropomorphism in an animated film to illustrate coming-of-age growth?" To support this question, I research the process of creating an anthropomorphic protagonist that can be featured in a narrative based on my personal childhood experiences. Furthermore, I also explore how a combination of various mythical tales from different cultures can be visualised in my film.

In Chapter 1, I establish the primary contextual theories that will be reflected in my animated film. Theories related to comparative mythology, anthropomorphism, nostalgia and coming-of-age are written in this chapter.

Chapter 2 addresses the method and methodology adopted for this research while researching the contextual theories that will be integrated into my animated film. The primary methodology is that of autoethnography; this is combined with action research to gain a deeper understanding of the narrative and character development required for my film.

Chapter 3 reviews the documentation and technical processes involved in making the final film, which is based on the ideas researched throughout Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. The use of symbolism in my film is also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 1: Contextual Review

In this chapter, I survey a variety of sources that facilitated a deeper understanding of my study's aims. The primary contexts that drove the research were the subjects of mythology, anthropomorphism, and nostalgia.

Keywords: mythology, anthropomorphism, nostalgia, iconic representation, coming-of-age

1.1. Mythology

One of the contexts that play a significant role in my research is mythology, i.e., collections of ancient mythical tales and folktales that have been recounted over generations. According to Okuyama Yoshiko "Myth-filled movies are a retelling of ancient human drama and time-honoured wisdom that have contemporary relevance."¹

For the ancient Greeks, mythology was an oral tradition and part of their education. A degree of familiarity with Greek mythology can be observed in contemporary examples, testifying to its universal resonance. These mythical tales are delivered through various mediums that include novels, films, photographs, and paintings, among others. Examples that I explored in this research include films that intertwine both animation and mythological sources such as *Pan's Labyrinth*² and *The Secret of Kells*³.

Joseph Campbell closely analysed the different story structures underlining a range of myths and pinpointed several archetypes, including the hero's journey. In *The Seven*

¹ Okuyama, Yoshiko. *Japanese Mythology in Film: A Semiotic Approach to Reading Japanese Film and Anime*. (Lexington Books, 2015.), 9[ix].

² *Pan's Labyrinth*. Directed by Guillermo del Toro. (2006; Picture house - Telecinco - Estudios Picasso Tequila Gang Esperanto Filmo. 2006.)DVD

³ *The Secret of Kell*. Directed by Tomm Moore, Nora Twomey, and Les Armateurs. (Les Armateurs - Cartoon Saloon - Vivi Film. 2010.)https://play.google.com/store/movies/details/The_Secret_of_Kells?gl=US&hl=en&id=QXBeiqfRhIA.P.

*Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories*⁴, Booker identifies storylines such as “the quest” and “rags to riches” as being some of the tropes of the hero’s journey cycle. These archetypes have been updated by screenwriters in a range of twentieth-century films such as *Star Wars*⁵, *The Lord of the Rings*⁶ and *Pretty Woman*⁷. In reference to my own childhood memories, I wish to employ mythological archetypes and draw on the narrative structure of the hero’s journey. This particular narrative trajectory mirrors my own experience of journeying from initial awkwardness to attaining a greater sense of self-confidence and understanding of a new environment

By relating my personal experience of moving from one country to another using the context of mythology, the reader can observe that for a child, such an upheaval possesses a sense of monumentality on par with the hero’s adventure in mythical tales. I am interested in the myths from a variety of cultures and, accordingly, have researched comparative mythology to inform my narrative.

Celtic mythology is foregrounded in *The Secret of Kells*⁸, an Irish animated film directed by Tomm Moore. The film demonstrates the significance of the Book of Kells which appears in Irish culture. The book is presented as an illuminated manuscript, ostensibly written in either Britain or Ireland and completed at the Abbey of Kells. On the other hand, the Spanish film, *Pan’s Labyrinth*⁹ employs mythological elements to evoke a mood of horror and tragedy in contrast to *The Secret of Kells*¹⁰ and emphasises a positive focus on Irish culture and mythology. The director presents the history of the Book of Kells alongside ideas from Celtic mythology. The method of using mythical symbolism in a story is essential for my

⁴ Booker, Christopher. *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories*. (Bloomsbury Publishing. 2004.), 59.

⁵ *Star Wars*, directed Lucas, George. (20th Century Fox, 1977.)
https://play.google.com/store/movies/details/Star_Wars_A_New_Hope?id=3FKPJ_88Io&hl=en_US

⁶ *The Lord of the Rings*, directed by Peter, Jackson. (New Line Cinema, 2002.)
https://play.google.com/store/movies/details/Lord_of_the_Rings_The_Fellowship_of_the_Ring?id=HXVAUsG-L4o&hl=en_US

⁷ *Pretty Woman*, directed by Garry, Marshall. (Buena Vista Pictures, 1990.)
https://play.google.com/store/movies/details/Pretty_Woman?id=822ECB957ED4B794MV&hl=en_US

^{8 10 11} Tomm Moore, Nora Twomey, and Les Armateurs, *The Secret of Kell*.

⁹ Guillermo del Toro, *Pan’s Labyrinth*.

research, as it reflects the enduring value of mythology in films. *The Secret of Kells*¹¹ conjures a strong sense of location as its hero negotiates various trials; this provided me with a pronounced sense of recognition based on my own personal adventures.

1.1.1. Comparative Mythology

Despite geographical and cultural differences, some countries appear to share similarities in their mythological stories. Although these connections are subtle, as the stories primarily comprise their unique plots, deities, supernatural entities and heroes, specific patterns can be observed using a detailed comparison. In his work, Joseph Campbell discusses comparative mythology as the study of similarities between mythological narratives from different countries, despite cultural and geographical variances. For example, Greek and Japanese mythologies feature several strong similarities when compared. In 2006, The gothic horror live-action film *Pan's Labyrinth*¹² directed by Guillermo del Toro has successfully established a mythological context. One of the characters in the film, Tenome, is a hybrid creation that incorporates various aspects of Roman, Greek and Japanese mythologies. This hybridity is also reflected in the film's plot, in which Del Toro combines a real event and the magnificent yet terrifying imaginary world of the young protagonist, Ofelia.

Ofelia's fictional world symbolises how the imaginary world can serve as a respite from the harsh reality of war. The fantastical events that Ofelia witnesses include aspects of Japanese, Greek, and Roman mythology, and these conglomerate in the portrayal of the "Pale Man", the horrifying creature that attacks Ofelia. The scene follows Ofelia as she attempts to accomplish her second task by entering the underground, a place guarded by the Pale Man. The creature can be seen quietly sitting at a dinner table by himself. Although there are plates of sumptuous food prepared on the table, he shows no interest in consuming any of it. The paintings on the wall depict gruesome imagery of the Pale Man devouring young children. Furthermore, dozens of children's shoes are scattered on the ground, hinting at horrific events that have previously taken place.

¹² Guillermo del Toro, *Pan's Labyrinth*.

Although Ofelia has been warned by fairy guides not to consume anything found in the underground. However, because she has not eaten anything the entire day, she cannot resist her hunger and proceeds to eat fruit from the Pale Man's dinner table. What Ofelia have done triggers the life-less Pale Man to start moving and we see him grabbing two fairies and proceeding to bite off their heads (Figure 1).

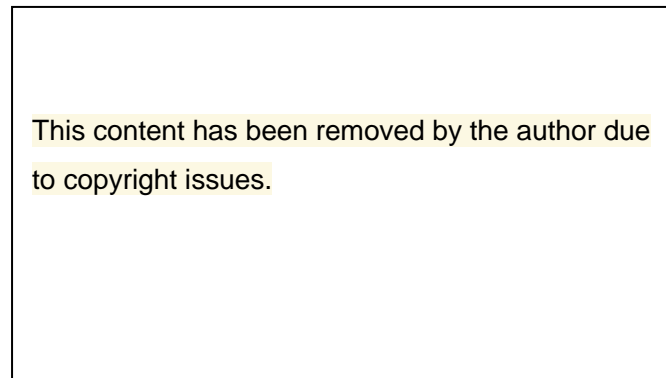


Figure 1(top) Del Toro, G. *Pale Man devouring a fairy* From *Pan's Labyrinth*, 2006, Still image from film, Warner Bros. Pictures

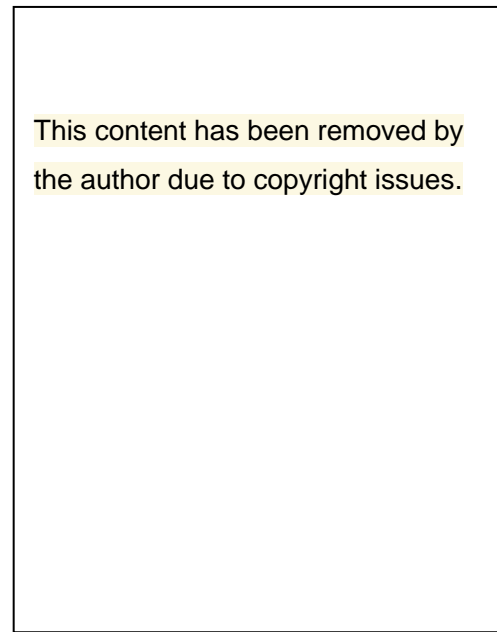


Figure 2(right) Goya, F. *Saturn Devouring His Son*. (c. 1819–1823) From Museo del Prado, Madrid.

This scene displays strong correlations with the oil painting “Saturn Devouring His Son”, painted by Spanish artist Francisco Goya¹³. The work depicts Cronus (or “Saturn” in Roman mythology), one of the Titans in Greek mythology. “Titans” refer to the god-children of Gaia (embodiment of the Earth) and Uranus (“the sky father”), who preceded the Olympians. After learning about a prophecy according to which he was destined to be overthrown by his sons, Cronus ate his children as soon as they were born, as depicted by Goya in the painting (Figure 2). The work comprises a pitch-black background with Cronus as the focal subject devouring his son. A deep sense of panic, fear, and anxiety is expressed in Cronus's eyes. Several similarities can be observed between the Pale Man and Cronus from Goya's painting (Figure 1&2) - both possess pale, drooped skin, and are seen devouring an

¹³ Goya, Francisco. *Saturn Devouring His Son* by Francisco Goya. Sometime in between 1819–1823. Oil mural transferred to canvas, 143×81. Museo del Prado, Madrid.
<https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/saturn/18110a75-b0e7-430c-bc73-2a4d55893bd6>.

innocent life. In addition to ideas from Greek mythology, the scene featuring In addition to the ideas from Greek mythology, the scene featuring the Pale Man also reflects both visual and symbolic concepts of Japanese mythology. The Pale Man's visual characteristics have been inspired by Tenome, a mythical Japanese creature. Tenome is initially depicted as an old man who was killed by a mugger. The old man then transforms into Tenome, a revenge-seeking monster. With eyes in its palms, Tenome would attack those who ventured into his graveyard to find the mugger. The Pale Man and Tenome share distinct habits, particularly protecting specific locations. For example, the Pale Man guards the underworld, while Tenome protects graveyards, and both attack those who enter their territory. Del Toro uses several symbols from the western and eastern comparative mythologies to give the audience from both areas a familiar, horrific impact. The western audience may see the Pale Man as Saturn who devours his child, while the eastern viewers may liken him to Tenome, the Japanese folklore monster.

This reflects onto Vidal as he is blind to his actions and cannot see that he is a cruel murderer. The Pale Man has an uncontrollable appetite and will kill to get what he wants. Vidal kills the innocent, takes their food which shows their innocence and is blind to the fact that he is a brutal murderer...¹⁴

In *Pan's Labyrinth*¹⁵, the Pale Man serves as a representation of Captain Vidal, Ofelia's stepfather. Vidal is a dictator during the post-Spanish Civil War period and his character communicates notions related to fascism. He is an extremely sadistic and cruel character, particularly to those who defy him. Even towards his wife and stepdaughter, Vidal's inhuman nature is evident when, for example, he disregards the health of Ofelia's mother in an emergency, commanding a doctor to save his pregnant wife's baby rather than his wife. Furthermore, near the climax of the film, Vidal chases Ofelia and shoots her to death to reclaim his son from her. He does not accept Ofelia as his daughter as well as treating her mother only as a tool that would provide him a son. The Pale Man feeding on children reflects how Vidal consumes powerless innocence to exploit his own power and resources. This includes the way he eliminates those who disobey him and his abuse of resources for his own benefit. This idea relates the fantasy aspect of the film to the history of

¹⁴ Church, Callum. El Laberinto Del Fauno Spanish Research Project. February 2018. United Kingdom. <https://callumchurch.wordpress.com/2018/02/27/el-laberinto-del-fauno-spanish-research-project/>

¹⁵ Guillermo del Toro, *Pan's Labyrinth*.

the post-Spanish Civil War context, creating nightmarish scenes that incorporate realistic fear along with fantastical horror.

The food in the Pale Man's cave also serves as a metaphor that foreshadows what will happen to Ofelia later in the film. In both Greek and Japanese mythology, several stories revolve around the idea of food in the underworld. For example, "Yomotsuhegu-I" refers to a traditional belief associated with Japanese mythology of how those who consume food in the underworld will not be able to return to the land of the living. By using aspects of different mythologies related to different cultures, even if the viewer is not familiar with the specifics of these myths, they will still likely be able to understand the director's purpose as represented in the film.

Ofelia's consumption of food in the underworld symbolises her death in the real world. Because she has completed her tasks at the end of the movie when she gets shot by Captain Vidal, she is accepted as a princess of the Elysium, the concept of which is defined as "The only people to be excused from Hades' realm were those who had been granted divinity...where certain souls, chosen by the gods, enjoyed a happy afterlife"¹⁶As such, Elysium exists for Ofelia as the kingdom of the underworld, where her parents, who have already died, are present as king and queen.

It is important to acknowledge how del Toro combines the real world with mythical elements in *Pan's Labyrinth*¹⁷, an approach that is referred to as magic realism. Magic realism is an expressive and creative technique through which a realistic environment with familiar signatures from our own world incorporates magical elements. This amalgamation can be found in myths, fairy tales and fables. Magic realism is a flourishing literature genre, particularly in Latin America, in the work of writers such as Gabriel García Márquez, author of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*¹⁸ and Isabel Allende, author of *The House of Spirits*¹⁹. Márquez, in turn, was influenced by the Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges and *The*

¹⁶ Sacks, David. *A Dictionary of the Ancient Greek World*. (Oxford University Press, 1996.), 8–9
<https://archive.org/details/dictionaryofanci00sack/page/8/mode/2up>.

¹⁷ ¹⁹ Guillermo del Toro, *Pan's Labyrinth*.

¹⁸ Márquez, Gabriel García. *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. (Jonathan Cape, 1970.)

¹⁹ Allende, Isabel. *The House of Spirits*. (Plaza & Janés, S.A., 1982.)

*Metamorphosis*²⁰ the absurdist novella by Czech novelist, Franz Kafka. In Japan, magic realism infuses the novels of Haruki Murakami and the animated films of Hayao Miyazaki. Extraordinary and magical events in the aforementioned works reflect symbolic value in that they allude to social or historical issues, or serve as metaphors for emotional states.

*Magical Realism and the Search for Identity in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki*²¹ explains the concept of magic realism that del Toro develops in *Pan's Labyrinth*²² as closely aligned with the description below. "[In the case of magic realism] a highly detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something 'too strange to believe'"²³.

The Pale Man, for example, has blemished skin and wrinkles, which contributes a degree of realism to the character's appearance. Contrastingly, the viewer knows that the film is set within Ofelia's imagination, allowing them to interpret the Pale Man as a mythical being. Del Toro employs mythology as a context for his film by expressing the contrast between reality and fantasy, and in doing so, alluding to the horrific historical context of warfare.

The "monomyth" is a concept similar to that of the hero's journey in comparative mythology. Campbell expanded on the idea of the monomyth as follows "The composite hero of the monomyth is a personage of exceptional gifts. Frequently he is honoured by his society, frequently unrecognized or disdained. He and/or the world in which he finds himself suffers from a symbolical deficiency"²⁴. Campbell's statement strongly aligns with the main character in my hero's journey story, who comes to symbolically represent the qualities required for countering the deficits within his world. His bravery and the adventurous journey he engages in to conquer his problem of adapting to a new environment is a primary focus of the production of my film.

²⁰ Franz, Kafka. *The Metamorphosis*. (Leipzig: Kurt Wolff Verlag, 1915.)

²¹ ²³ Strecher, Matthew C. *Magical Realism and the Search for Identity in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki*. Vol. 25(2). (The Journal of Japanese Studies, 1949), 267.

²² Guillermo del Toro, *Pan's Labyrinth*.

²⁴ Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. 3rd ed. New World Library, 1949.

1.2. Anthropomorphism

In the process of creating a narrative inspired by mythological tales, with a particular focus on the narrative arc of the hero's journey, the concept of anthropomorphism will be employed, i.e. endowing an animal with human-like characteristics. using potent symbolic meanings as evidenced, for example, in Aesop's fables, where the characteristics of an animal fulfil a symbolic role.

Within art, anthropomorphism is defined as the attribution of human-like emotions, traits, and characteristics to animals and object. In *Images of Animals: Anthropomorphism and Animal Mind*, Crist notes that anthropomorphism refers to the "figurative, erroneous, or naive attribution of human experiences to animals"²⁵ or a non-living icon. This notion was first explored at the initiation of ancient mythologies and remains popular today, where it is used in a variety of media types such as novels, films, and animation. For example, several of Aesop's fables²⁶, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*²⁷ and Wes Anderson's *Fantastic Mr. Fox*²⁸, film based on the book by Roald Dahl, all depict animal-based characters or subjects with human features.

Anthropomorphism is a feature that recurs throughout mythologies. In such narratives, gods and goddesses often take on a form while also adopting animal-like features, which in turn emphasises the divine aspects that humans lack. A similar strategy will be applied to my own characters. Wells explores the implications of animated anthropomorphic animals and suggests that such an animated representation:

*"[B]egins to offer a view of the ways in which animals are represented from the point of view of critical and cultural interpretation, functioning as a created phenomenon, as a symbolic paradigm to evaluate, and as supernormal stimuli by which to access a deeper, more primal mode of lost knowledge and experience"*²⁹

²⁵ Crist, Eileen. *Images of Animals: Anthropomorphism and Animal Mind*. (Temple University Press, 1865.), 7, kindle

²⁶ Aesop. *The Classic Treasury of Aesop's Fables* (Running Press Kids, 2007)

²⁷ Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Edited by John Tenniel. (United Kingdom: Wise house Classics, 2019.), Kindle

²⁸ *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, directed by Wes, Anderson. (20th Century Fox, 2009.)

²⁹ Wells, Paul. *The Animated Bestiary Animals, Cartoons, and Culture*. (New Brunswick (N.J.), Rutgers University Press, 2009.), 93

Wells states how using anthropomorphised animals can allow an audience to associate and interpret characters based on a wider range of ideas.

Anthropomorphism features prominently in the collection of Aesop's fables, a storyteller who was believed to have lived in Ancient Greece as a slave, and whose fables were passed down through generations in the oral tradition. Although these fables are credited to Aesop, due to oral permutations, it is highly likely that the original versions have been altered and re-imagined over time by different storytellers around the world. The anthropomorphic aspects of these fables aim to deliver a life lesson through the actions perpetrated by the characters in them.

Wells notes that the ways in which animators animate animal characters have changed over time, with different approaches being adopted in relation to an aesthetic language. Wells focuses on cartoons from the Golden Age of animation to illustrate this point. Cartoon studios, for example, typically depicted animal characters by investing them with an exaggerated sense of movement. He notes that, "Effectively, by aping animals physically, materially, and representationally, Disney can use these tropes to facilitate the animated form itself"³⁰ An example of this exaggeration is plasmaticness.

'Plasmaticness' is a technique that is often used in animation and can frequently be observed in cartoons created during the 'golden age of American animation'. It is the popularization of cartoon animation with sound from 1928 until the 1960s. Film director and theorist, Sergei Eisenstein, defines plasmaticness in *On Disney*³¹ as an animation technique that is free from the shape of the animated figure's skeleton, enabling the creation of rubber-like movement. As such, it is a technique that enables dynamic movement:

An ability which I would call 'plasmaticity' [enables a being] represented in a drawing, a being of a given form, a being that has achieved a particular appearance, [to behave] like primordial protoplasm, not yet having a stable form, but capable of taking on any and all forms of animal life on the ladder of evolution. ³²

³⁰ Wells, *The Animated Bestiary Animals*, 95

³¹ ³⁰ Eisenstein, Sergei, Leyda, Jay, ed. *Sergei Eisenstein: On Disney*. (Kolkata: Seagull Books, 2017.)
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Essentially, because animals express emotive currencies purely through physical movement and abstract sound, Walt Disney saw a direct parallel between the expression of emotional life and the particular conditions informing animation. Animal characters possess unique characteristics that allow them to convey their feelings to an audience. To deepen narratives, animators often take advantage of animal characters, which can help them reveal the nature of the animal world. An example of plasmaticness is *Silly Symphonies*³³, a series of animated short films created by Disney featuring characters with extreme 'squash-and-stretch' clay-like movements. These characters can twist, flatten and morph their bodies into a variety of shapes resembling a variety of objects (e.g. stairs).

Paul Wells' writing described how anthropomorphic characters are not only used to symbolise meaning. His work has also shown me how to apply animation techniques that represent actions humans cannot express. Furthermore, it has helped me to understand how animal characters and the plasmaticness technique function together. By developing the idea of plasmaticness further, animators can expand options for animating characters.

1.3.1 Anthropomorphism and Coming-of-Age-Growth

During my childhood, I regularly observed anthropomorphic characters when watching animated films and other media. They were a familiar fixture that presently still trigger an array of fond memories; these stories serve as a process by which I could assimilate new cultures and environments. This perspective will be integrated within my animated film and narrative, and there I will draw on my childhood memories that are enveloped in a sense of nostalgia.

*Paddington*³⁴ is a live-action computer graphic animated film directed by Paul King. The work incorporates the effective use of an anthropomorphic protagonist, which helps to depict the growth that occurs within a familial relationship. The main character, Paddington, is a bear who dreams of going to London. He was inspired by his uncle and aunt's story about an encounter with a human researcher. The film follows Paddington as his journeys to fulfil his dream in London. Paddington is a distinct example of anthropomorphism in film. King uses the film's context to create humour, as illustrated by the primary character's aunt

³³ *Silly Symphonies* produced by Walt Disney Productions. (1929–19,.Pat Powers,)

³⁴ *Paddington*, directed by Paul King (2014; Paris: StudioCanal, 2015) DVD.

having to move into a nursing home. However, the use of anthropomorphism also allows the film to reflect on bears in the real world and on the fact that they cannot live human lives. It focuses on the notion that, similar to humans, bears have a unique social order. When Paddington begins his life in the human world, he encounters several difficulties that emphasise the difference between bears and humans. For example, when Paddington arrives in the town, no one is trying to help him, but the Brown family. Furthermore, he is unable to utilise the bathroom properly, creating other problems throughout the story. These scenes illustrate and express how individuals of a younger age group will struggle to live independently when they live away from their families. Paddington causes problems because he does not understand how human society functions around him. He struggles to overcome the challenges he has to face in human daily life. The narrative also addresses the practice of animals being 'stuffed', which can be observed as a terrible act from the bear's perspective. Moreover, humans view teddy bears as cute and favourable toys in our popular culture. The film emphasises the idea of how a lovable 'toy' can create difficulties and conflicts between bears and humans living together.

Paddington features an anthropomorphic primary character to underscore how a bear reacts to the human social environment. This influences my research as it situates importance on the idea of choosing specific animal species that are suitable for the context. To create the same sense of nostalgia presented in *Paddington*, my film will use an anthropomorphic character derived from a type of animal species that is familiar to the audience. Taking *Paddington* as an example, a teddy bear functions as a device that arouses nostalgic feelings in the audience, reminding them about the stuffed toys they liked and played with as a child.

While developing my main protagonist, Aesop's fables helped me to understand the use of anthropomorphic characters in stories. The article, *Aesop, Aristotle, and Animals: The Role of Fables in Human Life*³⁵ focuses on analysing the use of animals in fables, primarily in the work of Aesop. Aesop's fable is a collection of tales credited to the eponymous ancient Greek storyteller. The bulk of these stories feature non-human characters, often animals, who can speak and behave like humans. The article analyses why the use of animal characters in Aesop's fables is significant.

³⁵ Clayton, Edward. *Aesop, Aristotle, and Animals: The Role of Fables in Human Life*. Vol. 21. (Central Michigan University, 2008.), 180.

In Ancient Greek anecdotes, animals were essential in the everyday lives of people. This resulted in them becoming popular subjects as main characters in fables, which allowed an audience to gain a better and in-depth understanding of the narrative in question. Storytellers tended to deliver these fables orally and, as such, it was easier for an audience to produce a distinct and clear image of the animal figures in the story.

Aesop's fables provide insight into understanding the importance of animal symbolism, which assisted me in implementing these ideas into my final work. As such, I was able to create characters that functioned within a mythological context, and which are familiar to a broad audience, taking into consideration the archetypes associated with such a context. This approach will assist in triggering a sense of nostalgia.

1.3. Yokai and Dokkaebi in Japanese and Korean Folklore

China, Japan and Korea share similar mythical creatures. According to urban legends, Chinese mythical creatures have been disseminated to Japan and Korea, creating connections between these Asian countries.

In his book, *A New Study of Japanese Monsters: The Japanese Mind as Seen Through the Eyes of Yokai*³⁶, anthropologist Kazuhiko Komatsu describes Japanese mythical creatures as the product of human fear towards inexplicable natural disasters. Humans in the past created images and sculptures depicting yokai in an attempt to explain the cause of phenomena such as plagues and thunderstorms.

People in the past created images and sculptures of yokai in an attempt to explain the cause of phenomena such as plagues and thunderstorms. Unlike the modern world, people in the past did not have the same in-depth understanding of such natural events.

In Korean folklore, however, they are collectively known as *dokkaebi*. Several monsters that appear in Greek mythology are known as “[beings that] commonly have frightening appearances³⁷”. On the other hand, they may “sometimes reward good people

³⁶ Kazuhiko, Komatsu. *A New Study of Japanese Monsters: The Japanese Mind as seen through the eyes of yokai*. Koudan-sha, 2015.

³⁷ ³⁵ Klepeis, Alicia Z. *Goblins. Creature of Fantasy*. (Cavendish Square, 2016.) 48

and punish the bad folks”³⁸. These creatures become significant components of the hero’s journey cycle in the way that they can function as the cause of challenges and temptations throughout the story. When comparing Greek myths with those of Japan, Korea, and other Asian mythologies, it can be observed that they share similar fabled creatures. In the current context, the term “yokai” is used when referring to mythical creatures in Japan and “dokkaebi” in Korea.

My understanding of the Korean dokkaebi derives from Kim Yongui's article about comparative mythology. Yongui discusses the similarities between Japanese yokai and Korean dokkaebi and describes how the latter are associated with a broad range of meanings. Visually, dokkaebi evolved over time in close relation to the political, economic, and social contexts of Korea. However, they did not have an accurate representation of dokkaebi. Dokkaebi have generally been employed to symbolise evil beings and sometimes appear in folktales for children.

Korean goblin lore considered goblins [to be the] spirits of wicked people trapped in purgatory. These spirits [wandered] the world, causing hardship for people... They roam [at]...night, creating mischief, [rewarding] good people and [punishing those who are] evil, playing nasty tricks on them.³⁹

Based on the above definitions, It describes monsters and dokkaebi as anthropomorphic equivalents of bad luck and fear. By portraying these entities, people in the ancient past could anchor their fears of the unknown to a particular cause. The visual appearance of dokkaebi also frequently change between different narratives; dokkaebi taking the form of a woman that tricks men are called ‘Gawks Dokkaebi’, while evil and cruel dokkaebi are called ‘Gae Dokkaebi’.

Dokkaebi plays an important role in Korean folktales. It is a key character who reward righteous individuals and punish immoral acts. The characteristics of this creature can be observed in the story of the *Dokkaebi Club* and the *Dokkaebi Gamtu* (traditional Korean headwear). While hiding, the main protagonists from both of tales first discover a magical item that belongs to the Dokkaebi. *Dokkaebi Club* features a kind-hearted protagonist who

³⁹ Shaijan, Annliya. “Goblin Mythology: A Brief Study of the Archetype, Tracing the Explications in English Literature,” *Global Journal of Human-social Science: A Arts & Humanities*, 19, no. 4 (2019), 8.

always shares whatever he earns and works stoically for his family. One day, he picks up the Dokkaebi's club, which is revealed to be a magical item that can create gold and silver out of thin air. This becomes a reward for the humble man and his family. However, a greedy man attempts to steal the club from the Dokkaebi but eventually gets caught and punished for his selfish actions. Comparatively, in *Dokkaebi Gamtu*, the magical item is a hat that can turn the wearer invisible. The greedy man begins to exploit it to steal food and valuables from others. However, he is ultimately punished by the villagers for his greed after his wrongdoings have been exposed. This is an example where the Dokkaebi, although indirectly, have contributed to the punishing of an immoral character. It is evident from these folklores that the dokkaebi can function differently in the same context, as an obstacle and as a being that rewards the main protagonist.

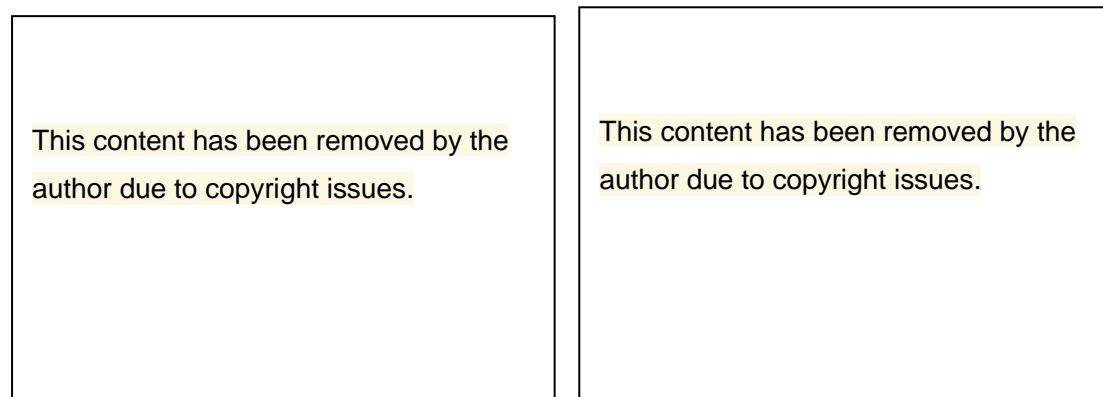


Figure 3. (left) Kiyomitsu Tori-i, *Koumyou Senya no Saki: Uso Hanashi*, 5, 1775, National Diet Library Digital Collections.

Figure 4(right) Governor-General of Korea, *Normal School Korean Textbook*, 1923 series 2, image from the textbook, Korean Government.

Though iconic, the image of the Dokkaebi has remained vague throughout history. There are many different types of Dokkaebi. Some are almost humanoid or depicted to share similarities with animals and others as ancient artefacts that have been transformed into Dokkaebi. Additionally, Japanese monsters are referred to as *yokai* and also come in various types and forms. As a comparative myth, in Korea, Dokkaebi was considered to be the same beings as *yokai*.

A contemporary portrayal of the Korean Dokkaebi sometimes shows them as having horns on their heads, having red or blue skin with tiger-like patterns and carrying a metal rod. This displays a significant degree of similarity to Japanese goblins known as 'Oni', a type of yokai, indicating how visual representations of Dokkaebi sometimes appear with Japanese Oni influences. Comparatively, the visual depiction of Dokkaebi in the Korean textbook (fig. 4) is very similar to the Oni (fig. 3) in the Japanese book. Due to these similarities, a significant social issue known as the 'Dokkaebi controversy' arose, which was widely discussed by Korean individuals who attempted to create their versions of Dokkaebi. Professor Yongui Kim explains the changes in visualising Dokkaebi in *The influence of Japanese Oni in the Korean: Imagination of Tokebi (monsters)*⁴⁰. During the late 20th century, several Korean artists tried to design a Dokkaebi without the Oni's iconic tiger's skin loincloth or metal rod. Figure 5 shows one of the new Dokkaebi depictions illustrated by Bionghak Oh. However, these designs have not been established as common imagery. Nonetheless, there is a rich history of Dokkaebi visual iconography in contemporary Korea.

This content has been removed by the author due to copyright issues.

Figure 5 Retold by Yangi Kim, Illustrated by Bionghak Oh, *Baui Who Won the Dokkaebi (Dokkaebi ni katta Baui)*, 1974, picture book, Hukuinkan Publish.

For example, figure 5 shows one of a new design of Dokkaebi illustrated by Bionghak Oh. However, these designs failed to become established as common imagery. As such, there is a deep history regarding the visual iconography of dokkaebi in contemporary Korea.

A critical question that needs to be discussed while researching this social movement for my film is "do different countries depict similar mythical beings in their folklores?" Comparative mythology can reveal similarities between the mythic narratives of neighbouring Asian countries.

⁴⁰ Yongi, Kim, 'The influence of Japanese Oni in the Korean : imagination of Tokebi (monsters)', Nichibunken Forum 190, (2006): 23-26.

1.4. Iconic Representation

The importance of using iconic visuals in films is well established, as cartoonist Scott McCloud theorises about the word 'icon' in *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. He defines an icon as an image "used to represent a person, place, thing or idea... the icon[s] we call pictures [are] images designed to actually resemble their subjects"⁴¹.

Comics and cartoons employ variants of simplified characters, objects and settings. McCloud notes how the images in comic strips are 'pictorial icons' in which reality is simplified to a more abstract style using flat colouring, , minimised shading and tone (McCloud, 1993).

In the method/methodology section, I refer to his idea of the simplified pictorial icon when discussing my character designs. I also refer to creating visualisations of mythical icons to include in my work, This type of icon can be considered the 'call to adventure' aspect in the hero's journey diagram. An example of this is *The Book of Kells*⁴² (noted in the "Mythology" section of this paper), which acts as an essential iconic item within its own narrative. Linking this to Greek mythology, many stories have an iconic item which plays an important role, and when that item appears in a film or painting, the audience can recognise which story it is based from. For example, a painting called The Judgment of Paris.

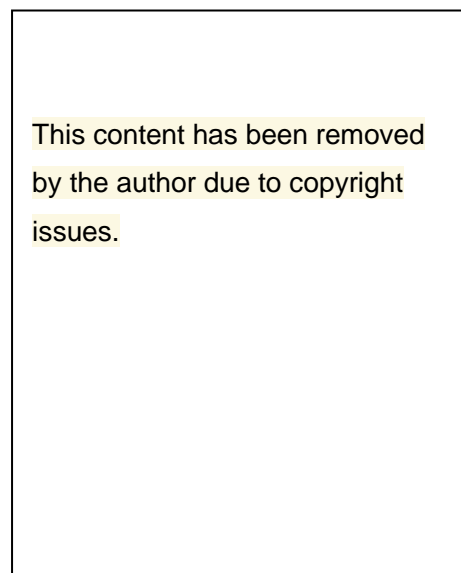


Figure 6. Thompson, Bob. *The Judgment of Paris*, 1964, Oil on canvas From Courtesy of Michael Rosenfeld Gallery.(<http://collections.mwpai.org/objects/11508/the-judgment-of-paris?ctx=2b6d7ca3-d872-43f4-a94f-53cff13e291d&idx=1>)

⁴¹ McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. Illustrated. (William Morrow Paperbacks, 1994.), 27.

⁴² Tamm M, Nora T, and Les A, *The Secret of Kell*.

McCloud explains that simplifying icons can help an audience to focus on the specific details of a symbol, which allows the artist to deliver essential meanings directly. For example, African-American painter Bob Thompson was recognised for his work reflecting the influence of the Old Masters in Europe. Many of his artworks reflect abstract, jazz-styled and expressionist styles. Thompson employed strong, vivid colours alongside simplified figures. He also painted a series of mythological paintings utilising a simplified expressionist style. An example of this is *The Judgement of Paris* (Figure 6), a tribute to earlier paintings by 16th and 17th-Century European artists. *The Judgement of Paris* reflects an ancient Greek myth. It features a beauty contest between three goddesses, Athena, Aphrodite and Hera, the most beautiful goddesses of Olympus, with Paris acting as judge.

The painting draws the viewer's attention using a familiar, modern, simplified art style of abstract expressionism. ; Thompson's style allows the painting to reflect important symbolic meanings through simplified pictorial icons(Figure 6); this includes a red apple, three goddesses, and a prince. Thompson visited Europe to study the work of the Old Masters. He approached the context of mythology using compositional strategies employed by the Old Masters and arranged them within his own artistic style.

The way the painting draws the viewer's attention using a modern, simplified art style indicates that the work was produced during the time when abstract expressionism became prominent in America. He delivers the value of old masterpieces and mythology by drawing famous motifs from Greek mythology that were commonly depicted in works from the Renaissance. This can also be observed in his other paintings, for instance, *Triumph of Bacchus*⁴³ and *Nativity*⁴⁴. I also intend to incorporate mythological elements in my animation style.

It is important that the audience can recognise key items and figures associated with mythology in my work, such as The Judgment of Paris, as well as the mythological tales that inspired my project outcome.

McCloud explains why cartoons are particularly fascinating to children compared to watching realistic characters in live-action films. A simplified character in a cartoon is a kind of 'empty shell' that allows children to be involved in what the character experiences. In this

⁴³ Thompson, Bob. *Triumph of Bacchus*. 1964. Oil on canvas, 153 × 183.2, Whitney Museum, New York. <https://whitney.org/collection/works/11712>

⁴⁴ Thompson, Bob. *Nativity*. 1961. Oil on canvas, 92.4 x 102.8, Private collection, New York.

way, children can 'live' different imaginative events and emotions in which cartoon protagonists are involved. To illustrate, when I watched the animated film *Pinocchio*⁴⁵ as a child, I had an unpleasant, almost traumatising experience when Pinocchio's nose grew because he lied. I became frightened to the point where I was terrified about lying to my family, and this remains one of my memorable past experiences. Based on McCloud's explanation and my own experience, I recognised the visual power of the character design. To create a pleasing character design, the audience should be able to understand and identify with the protagonist's characteristics. In addition, the element of simplicity should be considered for the audience's engagement with the specific symbols that the director intentionally employed. Directed by Alexandra Hetmerová, the short-animated film *Mythopolis* includes a Greek mythological motif in the characters. For example, the main character with a cow's head is the monster that appears in the story, *Minotaur*, and his three-headed pet hamster is based on Cerberus, the guard dog in the underworld. Hetmerová deliberately maintains simplicity in the character design, which leads the audience to easily recognise that the mythical motif is from Greek mythology. When this strategy is applied to my film, *Ticket To*, the character design allows the audience to recognise which methodology is being presented and inspires me as a storyteller.

1.5. Nostalgia

Nostalgia is an essential and primary context that supports my research, using an anthropomorphic 2D character, Professor of Social and Personality Psychology, Constantine Sedikides, has defined the word "nostalgia" as follows: "[A] contemporary definition of nostalgia [can be presented as] a sentimental longing for one's past. It is, moreover, a sentimentality that is pervasively experienced"⁴⁶

Nostalgia refers to a yearning directed at personal experiences from the past. Using nostalgic concepts alongside the context of mythology is vital in my research, as myth is a significant component of my nostalgic memories. For instance, a prominent aspect of my childhood consisted of reading and watching works related to mythological tales which helped me greatly when adapting to an unfamiliar environment. In such a way the context of mythology becomes a part of my own nostalgia.

⁴⁵ *Pinocchio*, directed by Ben Sharpsteen and Hamilton Luske (1940; *City*: Walt Disney, 2017), Blu-ray.

⁴⁶ Sedikides, Constantine, et al. "Nostalgia: Past, Present, and Future." *Association for Psychological Science* 17, no. 5 (2008): 305.

The fully animated 3D film, *Toy Story*⁴⁷ reflects on the context of nostalgia using children's toys. The film poses the questions, "what if our childhood toys had a life of their own?" and "what if they had their own adventures when we were not playing with them?" As adults, if we happen to one day come across our old childhood toys at the back of a wardrobe the experience may trigger an unexplainable feeling of nostalgia. "[More than] 80% of British undergraduates reported experiencing nostalgia at least once a week⁴⁸. This quote indicates that triggering nostalgia is a common occurrence. *Toy Story* provides the young audience with a fantastical notion, i.e. that their toys may come to life when they are by themselves. The film depicts the growth of a child from the toy's point of view, showing how their interest in toys develop as they become older Conversely, a more mature audience can experience nostalgia by remembering the toys they used to play with as children

Toy Story was the first computer-generated animated feature film. The film visualises the nostalgic memories of childhood toys but does so from the toys' perspectives. The story introduces us to Andy, a young boy whose favourite toy is Sheriff Woody, the protagonist of the film.

In *Toy Story*, Woody becomes jealous of a new toy called Buzz Lightyear. Arguably, we all had a favourite toy during childhood. We also may have experienced a sense of disconnection from our existing toys when given a new one. *Toy Story* is meaningful in terms of how it reflects the notion of "how do toys feel about our behaviour when we no longer want them?" As the first computer-generated animated feature film, *Toy Story* is significant. When the film was produced, computer graphics were not as advanced as they presently are. At the time, few options were available as lighting tools, which made shadows and textures look unnaturally smooth. This underdeveloped technology resulted in challenges when applying computer-generated characters in films, as they frequently inhabited the so-called uncanny valley. However, Pixar took advantage of this uncanniness by focusing on toys as primary characters. Thus, the smooth surfaces became relevant as they reflected the plastic texture of the characters/toys.

⁴⁷ *Toy Story*, directed by Lasseter, John. (Pixar-Walt Disney, 1995.) Prime Video.

⁴⁸ Sedikides, Constantine, et al. "Nostalgia: Past, Present, and Future." *Association for Psychological Science* 17, no. 5 (2008): 305.

In the analysis, "*Toy Story, A Critical Reading*" Kemper notes about *Toy Story*: "The film galvanises our facility to envision alternative realities and different perspectives, [to see] the world afresh from another scale and [conjure] up our own memories and spirit of childhood play"⁴⁹. The film explores the world of children's toys, which is a theme that can effectively trigger nostalgic memories from our childhood. It also created a wider audience for animated films that included both younger and older viewers. On seeing the film, younger viewers may be inspired to think of their toys as "alive" and having emotions, which may affect how they treat their toys. Contrastingly, mature audiences watching the film may experience a sense of nostalgia about their childhood and the memories associated with their once-favourite toys.

Kemper has analysed the use of colour in *Toy Story*, and has related it to nostalgia as well. The animators of *Toy Story* created a visually nostalgic background setting for the film. Disney retained a natural colour scheme for the film as in some of its older films such as *Sleeping Beauty*⁵⁰ and *One Hundred and One Dalmatians*⁵¹. The backgrounds for *Toy Story* include highly detailed "brushed" textures. When characters occupy a scene, this makes the film take on the appearance of a finished traditional art painting. Contrastingly, the film employs strong contrasts between light and shadow as observed through the use of primary colours. This creates a strong sense of nostalgia that reflects how an environment might appear particularly bright and colourful to a child.

The article, *The Influence of Colour on Memory Performance: A Review*, theorises how "colour helps us [to memorize specific] information by increasing our attentional level. The role played by colour in enhancing our attention level is undisputable."⁵² Colour comes across as a strong component linked to memory. The article also notes that bringing more attention to colour provides more opportunities for accessing strong memories.

⁴⁹ Kemper, Tom. *Toy Story, A Critical Reading*. 2015th ed. (British Film Institute, 2015), 7.

⁵⁰ *Sleeping Beauty*, directed by Clyde Geronimi. (Buena Vista Distribution, 1959.) DVD (Walt Disney, 2003)

⁵¹ *One Hundred and One Dalmatians*, directed by Geronimi, Clyde, et al. (Buena Vista Pictures Distribution, 1961.) DVD (Walt Disney Productions 2008)

⁵² Dzulkifli, Mariam Adawiah, and Muhammad Faiz Mustafar. "The Influence of Colour on Memory Performance: A Review," (March 2013.), 4.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3743993/>.

Toy Story inspired me to use the concept of nostalgia and to conduct additional research to illustrate my own nostalgic memory using a method of my own. I will combine my personal experiences with elements of mythology and use this approach to illustrate a connection between them and the nostalgic and traumatic events of my past. I want to combine mythological contexts and childhood memories within my film. Accordingly, the context of nostalgia is an essential aspect of my research.

Review of Spirited Away

*Spirited Away*⁵³ is another film I used as a reference. The film employs 2D animation to tell the story of Chihiro, a ten-year-old girl who is moving to the countryside with her family. The story begins with Chihiro unhappily sitting in a car with her mother and father on the way to their new home. She cradles a bouquet of flowers and reads a card she was given by a friend from her previous school. On the way to their new home, they become lost and stop at a dead end with an ominous-looking tunnel. Her parents become interested in the tunnel and want to see what is on the other side. Fearful, Chihiro tries to stop them but her parents only halfheartedly tell her to wait in the car. Chihiro does not want to be alone, however, and follows her parents into the tunnel. Her parents are unaware that Chihiro is worried; when she holds onto her mother's hand, Chihiro's mother seems bothered and tells her, "You'll make me trip, Chihiro, clinging like that". This scene illustrates that Chihiro is still a defenseless child who seeks protection from adults. Her parents walk at their own pace, not caring that Chihiro may not be able to keep up. Chihiro stumbles as she moves across stairs and bumps in the road. This indicates the contrasting feelings experienced by adults and children and illustrates how Chihiro's parents do not understand their daughter's anxiety about feeling unsafe inside the tunnel.

After Chihiro's parents are turned into pigs due to eating food at an empty open market without permission, several ghostly spirits appear. Chihiro panics and cries out for her parents. The scene reflects that Chihiro feels lost and alone and does not know what to do. She tries to find someone who can protect her. Chihiro learns manners and skills while working in the bathhouse, called Yuya from Haku, Kamaji and Rin, who fulfils the role of a model adult. Chihiro needed find a job, because in the spirited world, if you don't have any

⁵³ *Spirited Away*, directed by Miyazaki, Hayao.(Ghibli, 2001) Blu-ray (2017).

work, the owner witch of Yuya, Yubaba will change them into a animal and they can never return to the real world. One of the bathhouse workers, Haku, is a character that contrasts with Chihiro. Visually, Chihiro and Haku appear to be a similar age. However, Haku is also a model adult character who fulfils the role of encouraging Chihiro's growth from a helpless child into an adolescent

Haku assigns Chihiro the task of crossing the bridge, which is the only pathway that can be taken to meet the Yubaba in the bathhouse. They also cannot let others know that Chihiro is a human until she is given a job. While crossing the bridge, Chihiro must hold her breath until they arrive at Yuya's entrance. This was a difficult challenge for Chihiro, as the bridge was populated with creatures and spirits; just moments before this scene, Chihiro would panic and scream whenever she saw these beings. Chihiro had to stay calm and hold her breath as she passed them.

Earlier, Chihiro panicked upon seeing the market spirits; however, she trusts that Haku is trying to help her and that he understands she needs to complete a task on her own. Haku brings her a rice ball when she is having a difficult time at work and encourages her when she begins crying. Haku thus provides support to Chihiro as she matures.

Kamaji is a pharmacist who creates medicated baths for the bathhouse customers. When Chihiro provides help to a Susuwatari – a small soot spirit working for Kamaji – she attempts to leave the work halfway but Kamaji tells her to finish what she started if she wants to help him. Another Susuwataris also pretends to need help from Chihiro. Kamaji scolds Chihiro for taking people's jobs on a whim and teaches Chihiro about the responsibility of working for a living. While Kamaji may seem unkind and harsh, he helps Chihiro hide her identity as a human, to find work in the bathhouse and later gives her a train ticket to Zeniba's house. He is stern yet gentle, similar to the relationship between grandfather and granddaughter.

Rin is one of the Yuna, the women who work under Yubaba and live in the bathhouse. Rin fulfils the role of a family member and senior colleague to Chihiro. She is a strong-willed woman who is responsible for taking care of Chihiro and teaching her how to be a Yuna. Chihiro does not respond or say thanks to people at the start and Rin scolds Chihiro for this. Chihiro thanks Kamaji for helping her, which is good manners. Rin also cares about Chihiro's safety. For example, she tells her not to lean out of an elevator to avoid being injured; she also tells Chihiro to hide her from the other workers to avoid being recognised as human.

When Chihiro is successful as a bathhouse worker, Rin praises her. Chihiro learns manners after Rin scolds her and begins to respond to people and thanking them. The audience can see that Chihiro is slowly maturing. At the start of the film when Chihiro enters the spirit world, she cannot do anything by herself or without her parents. After being taught by Rin, however, she succeeds in making her first bathhouse customer happy, indicating how she can now think for herself because of what she has learned.

While Chihiro mentally matures by working in the bathhouse, a character that represents Chihiro as a child is introduced in the form of No-Face, a Kaonashi that symbolises a lost child. No-Face creates gold in a bid to get everyone's attention in the bathhouse. However, this approach does not work with Chihiro's and angers the Kaonashi, who starts to eat the bathhouse workers. It cannot control its moods or its own power; it is like a child in the midst of a tantrum. However, Chihiro is not afraid of confronting the Kaonashi. At this point in the film, Chihiro has become a guide to those younger than her, sharing what she has learned to help them mature, too. She is able to show compassion for the Kaonashi and shows attention to its needs by giving it the medicine dumplings that were supposed to be given to her parents. She also finds the Kaonashi's a place to stay where it will not be lonely. Once, Chihiro had been alone and crying and Haku had guided her to Yuya. Now, Chihiro is the one who takes the lead and helps the Kaonashi find a new home.

At the end of *Spirited Away*⁵⁴, when Chihiro returns to her own world, the audience can see how she has changed after her adventure in the spirit world. At the start of the film, she had been afraid of walking through the tunnel with her parents. At the end of the film, she can approach the tunnel comfortably. The viewer can see that she has matured. Chihiro represents a coming-of-age character moving toward adolescence.

In addition to the coming-of-age theme, notions linked to mythology can also be observed in *Spirited Away*. Haku tells Chihiro not to look back at the spirit world when she returns through the tunnel to the real world. These 'do-not-look' cautions can be found in the myths and folk tales of several countries and are linked to the story of Pandora's box, a taboo that is iconic in folklore and myths in terms of signifying failure⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Miyazaki, *Spirited Away*.

⁵⁵ Panofsky, Dora, and Erwin Panofsky. *Pandora's Box: The Changing Aspects of a Mythical Symbol*. 2nd ed. (Princeton University Press, 1962.), 185

In the story of Pandora's box, Pandora is told not to open a box given by her husband, Epimetheus, one of the Titan gods. However, unable to resist her urge, she opens the box out of curiosity, causing all evil to be released into the world, such as pain, hunger, disease and more, and only hope to be left in the box.

This story, Pandora's Box, has influenced other narratives. For example, there is *Bluebeard*⁶⁶, a French folktale by Charles Perrault from his book *Mother Goose Tales*, and the Japanese folklore of "The Grateful Crane", which are both examples that address this taboo. Many fictional characters do not heed a warning and, as a result, experience misfortune.

This taboo is present in several mythic narratives, e.g. in the Japanese story of Izanagi. Izanagi wanted his dead wife, Izanami, to come back to life, so he goes underground to find her. Izanami told Izanagi never to open the door to the underworld while she was confronting the god of the underworld to let her return to the living world. However, Izanagi was impatient and did exactly this; as a result, he was able to see his wife again, but she was herself could never be alive again. Greek myth presents a similar story. Orpheus, a musician, enters the underworld to return his wife, Eurydice, to the land of the living. To achieve this, Orpheus is forbidden from looking at Eurydice until she has left the underworld. Nonetheless, Orpheus turns to look at Eurydice to make sure she is following him, thereby breaking the 'do-not-look' taboo. Breaking this taboo usually results in a curse, misfortune, unfortune, or a dangerous situation. has a rule that if you break the do-not-look taboo in the mythical stories, there a curse happens. For example, the Pandora's b Box is a typical story with the featuring this taboo, from Greek mythology. Pandora is the first woman who has been sent by the God Zeus, with box. Pandora opens the box with curiosity. The box was is full of evils, death and curses. In the end she quickly closes the box, and there is only hope in the box left. In *Spirited Away*⁵⁷, Chihiro is able to return home safely because she does not contravene this taboo.

Accordingly, *Spirited Away* is an example of a film that conveys a story about growing up using a child's fantastical worldview. The hair-tie Chihiro receives from Zeni-ba, the twin sister of Yubaba, is still tied in Chihiro's hair once she has left the spirit world. This indicates that Chihiro's adventure has not simply been an imagined experience story, unlike

⁵⁶ Perrault, Charles, "Contes de ma mère l'Oye (Stories of Mother Goose)" Archived in The Morgan Library & Museum New York, Manuscript in a scribal hand, 1695: 63.
<https://www.themorgan.org/collection/charles-perrault/manuscript>

⁵⁷ Miyazaki, *Spirited Away*.

Ofelia's perfect imaginary world in *Pan's Labyrinth*⁵⁸. Compared to *Pan's Labyrinth*⁵⁹, *Spirited Away* has an open ending that enables the viewer to interpret Chihiro's adventure as the product of a child's imagination or real experience.

Miyazaki created scenes that convey nostalgic Japanese feelings in *Spirited Away*. An article by Alistair Swale posits that Miyazaki's work takes a "culturalist" approach to nostalgia. She explains in *Miyazaki Hayao and the Aesthetics of Imagination: Nostalgia and Memory in Spirited Away* that Miyazaki's works "engage in nostalgia as a means to reclaim a lost past – an attempt to retrieve something essential to Japanese culture"⁶⁰. Miyazaki employs visuals that are reminiscent of a Japanese past; for example, the Yuya bathhouse is designed in the style of a 19th-Century Japanese bathhouse. Furthermore, one of the customers in Yuya, the Stink Spirit, can be interpreted as representing an environmental issue, i.e. the destruction of nostalgic nature. The spirit has been polluted by waste including a bicycle, a giant fridge and other kitchenware. This "culturalist" approach illustrates how the nostalgic past is slowly being lost within the present.

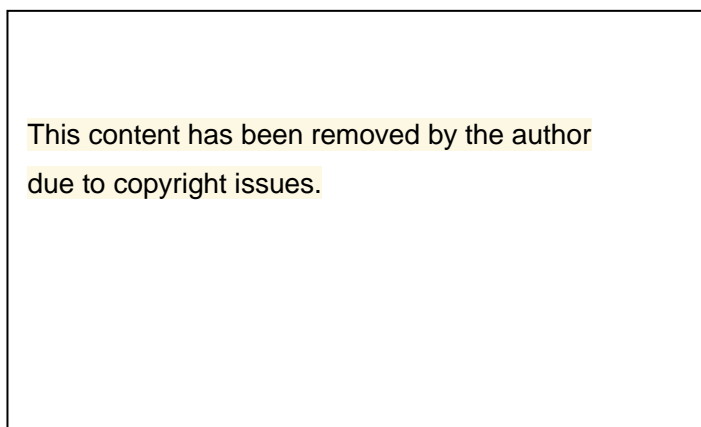


Figure 7. A still image adapted from *Spirited Away*, directed by Hayao Miyazaki (Studio Ghibli, 2001).

A specific scene that strongly underscores a sense of nostalgia is when Chihiro boards a train with the Kaonashi to see Zeni-ba. In figure 7, in the train, Chihiro gives her train ticket to the train driver who checks it manually, something that is presently not commonly observed. Semi-transparent passengers on the train are dressed in old-fashioned

⁵⁸ Guillermo del Toro, *Pan's Labyrinth*.

⁶⁰ Swale, Alistair. "Miyazaki Hayao and the Aesthetics of Imagination: Nostalgia and Memory in *Spirited Away*," 2015. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10357823.2015.1056086>

clothes. Outside, the train is surrounded by fields and warehouses and a dusky sky in the background. There are no modern high-rise buildings, only the expansive sky. This contrasts with the busy cities of the present. The train passes many neon signs before reaching a lonely, empty station in a forest where Chihiro must leave the train. Chihiro's journey from the busy town of Yuya to the desolate countryside-like area serves to give rise to nostalgic memory within Japanese culture. It is the memory of returning to a grandparent's home from the city to the countryside during Obon, an annual Buddhist holiday that commemorates the family's ancestors. Zeni-ba welcomes Chihiro and the Kaonashi into her warm home after their long trip from Yuya. Zeni-ba thus conveys to the audience the nostalgic memory of a grandmother greeting her family arriving from busy towns.

1.6. Coming of Age in Film

My personal childhood experience of learning a new language for the purpose of understanding an unfamiliar culture can be categorised into the “coming-of-age” stage of growing up. During this stage, I experienced a mixed cultural identity. It was a significant change for me as a child, as I went from my small world to learning how big our world is. When I began reading books and documentary films in a new language, it allowed me to learn about other cultures in more detail which I would not have known if I was unable to understand. This change from being a child to becoming an adolescent and eventually entering into adulthood denoted my coming-of-age process. films that present the theme of coming of age are *Bridge to Terabithia*.⁶¹

The article "Literary Themes Coming of Age"⁶² notes how the coming-of-age narrative is a recurring theme commonly used for the character development of a main protagonist from child to adolescent in literature. It is presented through the narrative, images, music and personal interactions that a young protagonist experiences. For the audience, “[The] coming of age [narrative] offers an appropriate metaphor for the transformative moments, spaces, and images that signal the end of one vision and mark the arrival of new perspectives that redefine us and our world.”

⁶¹ *Bridge to Terabithia*, directed by Csúpó, Gábor (Buena Vista Pictures Distribution, 2007.) DVD

⁶² bookworm. “Literary Themes Coming Of Age,” August 19, 2012. <https://literacle.com/literary-themes-coming-of-age/>.

Coming of Age on Film: Stories of Transformation in World Cinema presents an example of this theme in film. Among these films are those that portray adolescent protagonists embracing their emerging sexuality and a new awareness of themselves. Hardcastle explains this narrative type as follows “As the moment of transition from childhood to adulthood, coming of age is often considered a natural process through which positive development of the adolescent protagonist occurs”⁶³

A live-action film, *Bridge to Terabithia*, illustrates how a young boy, Jess, makes an important friend with whom he is able to share imaginative experiences. The film subsequently changes into a journey of mourning the loss of a friend. As Jess experiences sadness and grief, he is shown to mature from being a boy into an adult. The story is based on a novel by Katherine Paterson, who based the story on her own son who lost his best friend as the result of a natural disaster. Thirty years later, Paterson’s son, David L. Paterson, became a producer of the film based on his mother’s novel. Using their experiences as inspiration, the author and her son were able to share their childhood memories with film audiences. The story reflects how a childhood friend can become significant enough to create a powerful influence on an individual and their future life.

Chapter 2: Research Design

This study aims to establish how I can create a hybrid mythological narrative based on personal cross-cultural memories and employ anthropomorphism in an animated film to highlight the enduring value of mythology. I adopted autoethnography and an action research approach to conduct my research. To support these processes, I focused on methods that included drawings/sketches, thumbnails, concept art, and contextual reviews. These processes were effective in clearly creating the visuals of my animated film and enabling effective storytelling.

2.1. Primary Methodology: Autoethnography

I employed autoethnography as a critical methodology for my 2D animation film. As I aimed to create a narrative derived from my childhood experiences, autoethnography supported doing so as underscored by the following definition:

⁶³ Hardcastle, Anne, edited by Roberta M and Kendall B Tarte. *Coming of Age on Film: Stories of Transformations in World Cinema: Stories of Transformation in World Cinema*. (2009.) 1.

*"[Autoethnography involves] written accounts about experiences providing [a] rich, full, detailed narrative and insight from the perspective of the person who is living and experiencing the researched phenomena"*⁶⁴

This approach critically reflects a creator's experiences by enabling the audience to empathically enter the lives of others within different social cultures. In pursuing the strategy of autoethnography, I will use my childhood experiences for my script. My autobiographical story, which relates to Asian social culture, constitutes the critical research to focus on for this type of methodology.

In the article, "Autoethnography: An Overview"⁶⁵, the word "autobiography" combines aspects of autobiography and ethnography

The writers explain the term 'epiphanies' as memorable experiences which impact the trajectory of a person's life in the article. I have listed my 'epiphanies' in order to denote significant moments that I remember as parts of my life experience.

I consider autoethnography to be the best fit for my design processes, allowing me to utilise my struggles as creative resources for *Ticket To*. As the process of autoethnography relies on the researcher's personal experience, it limits the amount of information that can be gathered. The researcher could not know something they never experienced before. Bochner and Ellis asked, 'if culture circulates through all of us, how can autoethnography be free of connection to a world beyond the self?'⁶⁶ By using autoethnography as my main methodology, I need to recognise the limitation of what can be shown to the audience, leading me to acknowledge that I only know small aspects of the living environment, culture and tradition from each country that I have lived in during my childhood.

⁶⁴ Heather L. Gallardo, et al. "Explorations of Depression: Poetry and Narrative in Autoethnographic Qualitative Research" 8, no. 3 (August 27, 2009): 288–89.

⁶⁵ Ellis, Carolyn, et al. "Autoethnography: An Overview." *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 1, 12 (January 2011). <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095>.

⁶⁶ Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. "Talking over ethnography". In *bibli: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing* (Walnut Creek, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, AltaMira Press, 1996) 13.

Personal Cross Culture Memories

My personal experience is at the heart of my narrative story. This led me to place my research focus on Greek, Japanese and Korean mythology through nostalgia. The biggest turning point in my childhood was when I had to move overseas three times, from New Zealand to Korea, then Japan, and back to New Zealand.

Whenever I travelled to a different country, it was as if I became a third culture kid who was lost in a completely separate world. I was surrounded by a new environment, language, and people but with no close friends. Loneliness has led me to mythology tales and folklore stories as a form of escape; these have brought me joy and piqued my curiosity in learning a new language. It also provoked me to make new friends who shared my interests.

During my time in Korea and Japan, I struggled to fit into the Eastern culture and learn new languages. I was lost and did not have enough motivation to learn. Therefore, I could not communicate with and explain my thoughts to my classmates and teachers. In New Zealand, prior to moving, I enjoyed reading Western fantasy stories and fables written in English, which provided me with a vast knowledge of various mythological motifs. Initially, I found a book written in a language that I could not understand. However, the cover's Greek mythological symbols sparked my interest in the book's content. Consequently, I became motivated to learn the new language to be able to read the book. Since then, I have read such books and discovered that along with Greek mythology, Eastern cultures also have intriguing mythology stories. As I kept reading these books, I soon discovered a friend who shared my interest in the same type of literature.

I will use my own experiences when illustrating memorable social events such as relocating between Japan and Korea during my childhood. Presently, I have a multi-cultural knowledge of New Zealand (Western culture) and also possess an Asian cultural identity. This is commonly referred to as biculturalism.

In the article, *Biculturalism and Adjustment: A Meta-Analysis*, Nguyen and Benet-Martínez introduce biculturalism as an approach for integrating acculturation strategies: "Biculturalism and acculturation are tightly intertwined, with biculturalism being one of four

ways [in which to] to acculturate...[while] acculturation is the process of learning and adapting to a new culture”⁶⁷

Acculturation under autoethnography

The narrative story of my film is based on my personal experience of how I acculturated to Asian culture. I have used acculturation under autoethnography because of the personal experiences provided me with hybrid cultural identity, and this mixture identity links to acculturation. It is important to reflect on my cultural experience in my film to show how this experience has strongly affected my life. effected to my life In the same article from above, Nguyen and Benet-Martínez note s the multiple research fields that allow individuals to acculturate:

"[Acculturation involves] language use or preference, social affiliation, daily living habits, cultural traditions, communication style, cultural identity/pride, perceived discrimination/prejudice, generational status, family socialisation, and cultural knowledge, beliefs, or values"⁶⁸

The statement above argues that the concept of acculturation has multiple domains and does not simply involve rejecting one culture to adapt to a new one. For example, in my personal case, I feel comfortable working in a Korean community workplace, but I also have confidence in living in the New Zealand social community at my university. In adapting to a new culture, I became interested in multi-cultural mythical stories and folktales, which inspired me to study other languages in order to read these stories. After mastering basic language skills, it became easier to acculturate to Japanese and Korean culture. My use of autoethnography aims to illustrate to an audience how I succeed at *"being part of a culture and/or...possessing a particular cultural identity"*⁶⁹, and to engender some sympathy for having to struggle to adapt to different social cultures as part of my coming-of-age narrative

Through the methodology of autoethnography, I utilised my personal experience to become part of the fieldwork I conducted. As a result, I was able to visualise my childhood

⁶⁷ Nguyen, Angela-MinhTu D., and Verónica Benet-Martínez. "Biculturalism and Adjustment A Meta-Analysis." (SAGE Publishing, 2012.) <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022111435097>. 123.

⁶⁸ Nguyen and Benet-Martínez, "Biculturalism and Adjustment."

⁶⁹ Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, "Autoethnography: An Overview."

experience of feeling initially like an outsider in Japan and Korea, but gaining insight into multiple cultural ideas as I became more accustomed to their culture.

To allow an audience to empathize with the experience of gaining confidence within a foreign culture through an identification with mythical stories, I have reflected this theme through my main character, and created a hero's journey narrative to show how he gains the courage to become closer to a new culture. This allowed me to visualise my experience of being an outsider to a culture and subsequently becoming a member of that culture. The knowledge of the different cultures I have learned about was used alongside books and films to develop my research.

2.2. Secondary Methodology: Action Research

My autoethnographic exploration is complemented by action research. Action research is suitable for testing how a specific practical method works. In Candy's *Practice-based Research: A Guide*⁷⁰, she refers to Muratovski's book, which defines practice-based research as an 'original investigation undertaken...to gain new knowledge partly using practice and the outcomes of that practice'. I used action research as a means to reflect on my work in the context of practice-based research.⁷¹ In *Guiding School Improvement with Action Research*⁷², Richard Sagor explains the process of action research in seven steps:

- Selecting a focus
- Clarifying theories
- Identifying research questions
- Collecting data
- Analysing data
- Reporting results
- Taking informed action

⁷⁰. Linda Candy, 'Practice Based Research: A Guide', *CCS Report: 2006-V1.0*, (2006):1.

⁷¹. Gjoko Muratovski, *Research for Designers: A Guide to Methods and Practice*. (London: Sage Publications, 2015), 191–194.

⁷². Richard Sagor, *Guiding School Improvement with Action Research*. (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2000.), 3–4.

My overall research will concentrate on the protagonist's character design, which will serve as an essential element in delivering the narrative based on my personal experience. The protagonist is important because the character reflects my childhood experiences and acts as a visual representation of nostalgia in the film. I aim to create a primary character that can serve as a symbol for communicating my experiences. The specific research approach involves establishing a process that combines anthropomorphism with animal symbolism and using the process' outcome to present my character's coming-of-age journey to an audience. To achieve this, I have researched several films that, to some degree, seek to achieve the same effect; this is associated with the second step, clarifying theories. This study is part of a contextual review and is applied as a method for collecting data on anthropomorphic or coming-of-age characters.

My animated film shares the struggles and feelings associated with my hybridised culture experience. These are strong memories that have broadened my world view. The identified research question centres on creating an anthropomorphic protagonist that can convey my personal experience. To attain this, I must engage in strong character design and create a clear narrative for my film. Under the action research method section, I have used the drawing/sketching method to fulfil the data collection and data analysis steps.

Contextual Review as a Method

In my research, I have conducted a contextual review by analysing different films and books in my previous writing. This method supports data analysis under the action research methodology. The aim is to investigate how the writers and directors created their work or writing and the purpose behind film production.

Through a reflection on my character-creation process, I have researched several films in *Chapter 1: Contextual Review* and *Chapter 2: Research Design* of this paper that make use of the elements that I wish to include in my film. These elements consist of anthropomorphic protagonists, mythic elements and narratives featuring a coming-of-age character. In *Using Contextual Analysis to evaluate texts*⁷³, Stephen C. Behrendt defines the method of contextual review as 'an analysis of a text (in whatever medium, including

⁷³. Stephen C. Behrendt, 'Using Contextual Analysis to evaluate texts', *College of Arts and Sciences, Department of English*, 2008, <http://english.unl.edu/sbehrendt/StudyQuestions/ContextualAnalysis.html>

multimedia) that helps us to assess that text within the context of its historical and cultural setting, but also in terms of its textuality'. Above all, I have analysed the related films in my research to comprehensively understand the context in terms of how the filmmakers/animators/directors have used nostalgia in their works to invite audiences to a specific era.

For the adult audience, a film with a sense of nostalgia activates memories of their early years and demonstrates how the world existed for the past generation. This includes places that have not yet surfaced in the present time such as a public area, a train station, or a shopping arcade in the city where many buildings are yet to be demolished. Martin Scorsese's live-action film *Hugo*⁷⁴ provides a distinct example. The film is set in 1930 in Paris and tells the story of how movies in the past were recorded without the aid of present technology, such as visual effects and computer graphics. For the senior generation, the film presents a nostalgic scene that features an old train station.

My project's purpose is to show my childhood as the main tool in delivering the nostalgic experience of growing up in an unfamiliar environment. By incorporating nostalgia, I can create opportunities for the audience to reflect on their childhood memories. This is an effective way to evoke their memories that are similar to my experiences depicted in the film. Thus, this would help the audience to create a powerful emotional connection with the story and to feel a sense of familiarity with my *Ticket To* characters.

⁷⁴. *Hugo*, directed by Martin Scorsese (2011; Hollywood, California: Paramount Home Entertainment, 2012) DVD.

2.4. Drawing/Sketching



Figure 8. Visual interpretation of the characters from “City Mouse and Country Mouse” and “The Rolling Rice Ball”. Doyeon Kim, digital sketch, 2019, Auckland

While collecting and analysing data for the action research step, I have used the Drawing/Sketching method. Using action research, I began with several sketches as a means to better understand aspects of anthropomorphism in Aesop's fables. By producing the sketches, I gained insight into the cultures represented in myths, as well as those in *Aesop's fables* and the folklore of other countries. A particular Aesop's fable that I focused on was “City Mouse and Country Mouse” and the Japanese folklore narrative, “The Rolling Rice Ball” (see Figure 8). I attempted to retain the iconic semiosis associated with the characters from these different stories and converted them into my own specific artistic style. The anthropomorphic aspects of these characters were selected because they reminded me of the cartoons I watched as a child.



Figure 9. Preliminary character designs of a cat and a mouse. Doyeon Kim, digital sketch, 2019, Auckland

The sketches in Figure 9 illustrate my exploration of anthropomorphic character designs. I chose to use anthropomorphic designs as this recalled childhood memories of

watching cartoon shows like *Scooby-Doo*⁷⁵ and *Tom and Jerry*⁷⁶ which mainly feature animal characters. The mouse protagonist, Jerry, is typically being chased by Tom, a cat. Jerry climbs over furniture and hides in a hole in the house where he lives. I enjoy observing the mouse run around the house. Because of its size, the mouse looks like it is having a big adventure; everything is large and tall, but Jerry can nonetheless go wherever he wishes. Accordingly, I decided to use mice in my prototype designs. In Aesop's stories, mice are presented as small and living in deep holes in the ground. Accordingly, my mouse protagonist represents the notion of "digging deep into old memories".

2.5. Concept Arts/Thumbnails



Figure 10.(left) Conceptual art of a scene in a cinema. Doyeon Kim, digital sketch, 2019

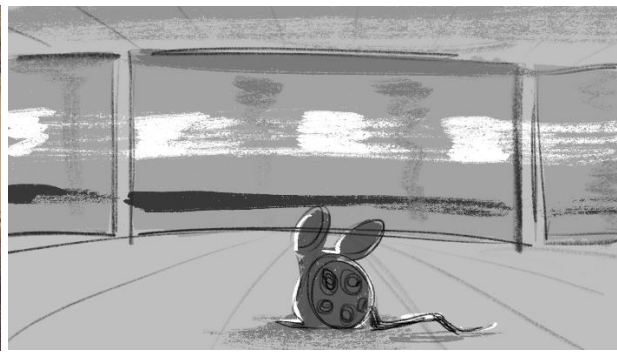


Figure 11.(right) Thumbnail of a scene in a train station. Doyeon Kim, digital sketch, 2019

I created concept art aimed at visualising and arranging my childhood memories into thumbnails. I wanted to create thumbnails that conveyed a sense of nostalgia (Figures 10 and 11), and others that reflected loneliness within the vast world surrounding the character, which would serve as a catalyst for growth. These thumbnails were based on my childhood nostalgic memories of Japan and Korea, where the outside world seemed colossal. Compared to my home country, New Zealand, these other two countries have many towering buildings and extremely busy traffic conditions.

⁷⁵ *Be Cool, Scooby-Doo!* Directed by Joe, Ruby, and Spears Ken. (Warner Bros. Animation, 1969.) TV series.

⁷⁶ *Tom and Jerry*. Directed by Hanna, William, et al. (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer cartoon studio, 1946. TV series.

From what I remember as a child, the streets of Japan and Korea were always busy with people and were surrounded by thousands of tall buildings. This heavily contrasted with life in New Zealand, where there were not as many people nor high buildings in its cities. Such differences provoked a strong sense of seclusion from the world. The busy environment made me feel insignificant. Everyone else seemed to live rather fast and recklessly, leaving me behind.

Later, when I became used to this modern Asian cultural environment, it came to represent nostalgic feelings. This process influenced my visualisation of my experience of having to move to another country with a different culture, which was difficult at times. As a result of this practice-based research involving character design and thumbnails, I realised that it can be difficult to illustrate the emotions of a character and their thoughts based purely on design. In the same way, it can also be difficult to indicate a character's age, which can impact a coming-of-age story

Examples of young characters in films include Boo in *Monsters, Inc.*⁷⁷ and Norman in *ParaNorman*⁷⁸. Boo is a kindergarten-aged girl who strays into the world of monsters, where the main monster characters, Sulley and Mike live. Because she is still very young, Boo does not understand that she is in a dangerous place, where monsters perceive humans as extremely dangerous. Boo is a perfect example of a character of her particular age. She is too young to speak a language but has a rich vocabulary in the form of facial and physical expressions with which to clearly express her feelings. She does not understand what is happening during the story and expresses her feelings in a straightforward manner. For example, when Sulley and Mike are terrified of her they scream and attempt to stay away from her. However, Boo giggles at their reaction and follows them as if they are playing, copying what Sulley does.

Norman Babcock in *ParaNorman* is an 11-year-old boy who can see ghosts, which makes people around him treat him like he is abnormal. I like how the director clearly shows Norman's characteristics at the beginning of the film. He has many objects related to zombies, including furniture, and the audience can see that Norman enjoys watching zombie

⁷⁷ *Monsters, Inc.* directed by Doctor, Pete. (Walt Disney Pictures, 2001.) Blu-ray (Buena Vista Pictures Distribution, 2009)

⁷⁸ . *ParaNorman* directed by Butler, Chris, Sam Fell, (United States: Focus Features, 2012.) DVD (Universal pictures, 2014.)

films from the opening scene. Norman's defining qualities are also evident in his character design. He has thick eyebrows that help to convey his facial expressions. When people view him as an "abnormal child" because of his "gift", Norman's eyebrows go down in a frown, nearly covering his eyes to indicate that he is uncomfortable. His posture marks him as a shy teenage boy with a slender frame, indicating that he is unable to fight those who bully him.

In *Spirited away*⁷⁹, Chihiro is an excellent example of a character portrayed as a child of her age. She has a skinny, flat silhouette, indicating a lack of muscle and that she has yet to experience an adolescent growth phase. The fact that she often trips over something also signals her as being naive and clumsy.

2.6. Character Profiling



Figure 12.(top) Sketches of the final character design. Doyeon Kim, digital sketch, 2020, Auckland



Figure 13.(right) Character analysis. Doyeon Kim, digital sketch, 2020, Auckland

Character profiling goes under the action research as the reporting result step. The character design examples in Figures 12 and 13 indicate my understanding of the need for good character design as a means for clearly conveying the specific characteristics of the

⁷⁹ Miyazaki, *Spirited Away*.

protagonist. When initially creating my character, the protagonist was designed as being between seven and nine years old; however, I believed this was too young for a child in the coming-of-age group. I am making a no dialogue film, and I researched aspects of adolescence to better illustrate the growth of my character.

*“[Genre] studies scholar Barbara White limits the definition of a coming-of-age narrative to focus on protagonists between the ages of 12 and 19... It is the sociocultural implications that cause the most debate among scholars. Indeed, since a coming-of-age narrative is dependent on a quest for an adult identity, this narrative is closely linked to other areas of identity development, such as gender, race, social class, and national identity”*⁸⁰

Based on the above definition, I created a twelve-year-old boy. (Figures 10 and 11). His characteristics had to reflect a child of his age and, as such, I had to know what a 12-year-old child looked like. The photography book, *At Twelve: Portraits of Young Women* by Sally Mann (1988) presents portraits of girls at the age of twelve, who primarily look in her age. Based on these portraits, my observation is that the age of 12 is a delicate age in which a child can still retain a sense of innocence while already developing into an adult. In extending my understanding of animated 12-year-old (or thereabouts) boys I also looked at the characters of Norman and Neil in *ParaNorman*⁸¹, who similarly combine a sense of delicacy and worldliness.

I designed my main protagonist to more closely still resemble a child. Later in my film, I show how he has matured from being a child to being an adolescent. To illustrate this, I designed him as simply as possible in terms of his expressions and habits (e.g. how he behaves when he feels uncomfortable). I also gave him a different type of smile in instances when he felt uncomfortably compared to when he was relaxed. Physical gestures and facial expressions are essential for conveying my character’s feelings without dialogue. As such, I designed him with simple clothing that does not cover his body too much. Through practice-based research, the visual appearance of my character became sufficiently clear in the film. To establish my protagonist’s characteristics at a more in-depth level, I decided to create a detailed character profile before creating the animation.

⁸⁰ Bookworm “Literary Themes Coming Of Age.” (Literary Articles, 2012) <https://literacle.com/literary-themes-coming-of-age/>

⁸¹⁸¹ Butler, Fell, *ParaNorman*.

Chapter 3: Documentation

I expanded on the main protagonist by creating a profile that lists his characteristics. This includes his likes and dislikes, relationships with others and how he would respond to an uncomfortable situation, among other things. By doing so, the human-like aspects of the protagonist's personality are emphasised, allowing the audience to connect and empathise with him. Furthermore, producing a detailed description of the character supported the decision-making process concerning his actions and thoughts during scriptwriting. In addition to the protagonist, I also created simpler profiles for the secondary characters who appear in my film.

3.1. Animatic

After producing these character profiles, I began working on the animatic based on the script. However, during this process, I realised that the script did not entirely follow the film as it should have. This was because I attempted to include different issues and struggles, I faced throughout my childhood as obstacles in the story; however, these were too numerous, which undermined the film in terms of delivering its primary message to an audience. In addition, the script comprised multiple scenes switching from one setting to another. This caused difficulties in terms of attempting to interpret what was happening onscreen, making it too time-consuming to visually produce the work.

Ultimately, I decided to remove a significant portion of the storyline to simplify the script, leaving only the scenes required to follow the rules of the hero's journey and hybrid mythological narrative.

Review of Hero's Journey

The aspect I investigated as part of the contextual review is the concept of the hero's journey as derived from Joseph Campbell, which he describes in *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*⁸². The hero's journey serves as a story template of heroic adventure narratives that also suits mythological tales. Campbell's research supports the discovery of narrative archetypes in the mythological stories of different cultures. The stories share basic similarities, which allowed me to combine myths from different cultures into one for my

⁸² Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

project, based on the theories of comparative mythology. The hero's journey is essential for my main character who becomes the “hero” of my narrative story; he is on the threshold of adventure and faces the test of a “*world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces*”. He will be tested and triumph to return with a reward – in this instance, the courage to gain a better understanding of a new culture. By combining different mythic narratives into one I will observe how this can reflect the primary narrative of a film that relates to my personal experiences.

I focused on language barriers as the main obstacle, based on my personal experience of attempting to learn a new language by reading cultural myths. This enabled fewer changes to the setting of the film, with the primary location (featured in most scenes) being the library. Subsequently, the overall length of the film was four minutes and 30 seconds, which helped to maintain a high-quality animation. While creating the animatic, I also included rough key animations to clearly bring across how the main protagonist would move and react to situations in each scene, based on his profile characteristics and personality.

Hybrid Mythological Narrative

To answer the project research question, I have created a hybrid mythological narrative. The hero is a boy who tries to help the dog he has found, which marks the beginning of the story. He then discovers a golden egg protected by a winged horse in a prone position; the egg is derived from Korean mythology and symbolises a king who rules and guides the country. In my film's hybrid mythological narrative story, the film roll that hatches from the golden egg guides the main protagonist throughout the story. Eventually, he is led to enter his imaginary world, alluding to entering the underworld that is often seen in mythology. In all the mythological tales that I have researched for this project, there is an underworld separate from the real world in which the mortal beings live. I have combined the Greek mythological character, Charon, a guide in the Greek underworld who carries the souls of the dead, with a subway train, which is one of my distinct childhood memories in Japan and Korea. I remember using the subway for the first time in Japan and Korea as a child. The subway symbolised travelling to an unknown place; it was a frightening experience as I did not know where I was going and was surrounded by unfamiliar faces. In the Japanese underworld, the dead crosses the river upon arrival, and I combined this concept with Charon's role.

Most mythological tales feature a hero's journey; hence, they often include an obstacle that the main protagonist must face. In the case of my narrative story, the train suddenly stops; however, various giants from different mythologies appear to help. In several of the mythologies that I have researched, giants are often involved, e.g. the Umibōzu from Japanese Mythology, the Greek giants, Gigantes, and the Korean goblin, Dokkaebi. They are often described as villains, yet in some tales, are noble creatures.

My film's story continues as the main character watches scenes of what he has experienced in the cinema. In Japanese mythology, a mirror in the underworld allows one to observe what others have done in their lives. Screening the main protagonist's adventure relates to this idea. At the end of the narrative, Hades stops the main character from eating the popcorn he was holding while concentrating on the film. The reason for Hades' action is that in both Greek and Japanese mythology there is a rule against eating food in the underworld. A living being who consumes food in the underworld would not be able to return to the real world. In the narrative, the main character wakes up after he has encountered Hades. I used this scene as a representation of separating from my imagination, relating to my experience of not only how reading fantasy and mythological stories effectively helped me learn a new language, but also how I should not dwell in the imaginary worlds of the stories that can isolate me from the reality I must confront.

After waking up from the dream, the main character tries to talk to the librarian to borrow a book. Concurrently, there is an owl nearby, a symbol of the goddess of wisdom, Metis. Its presence conveys how the insight he has acquired from reading the book guided him to face his reality. A movie ticket is found in between the pages of the borrowed book. It is a gift from his mythical imagination, which allows him to communicate with his friends. The main character should not rely solely on his imagination; it is vital that he becomes interested in something during his coming-of-age journey.

3.1.1. Technical Problem

While working on the sound effects, I experienced a technical issue with the Toon Boom Harmony software. When adding audio to the animatic, there were difficulties importing these files; furthermore, adding multiple sounds was a detailed and time-consuming process. As a result, I decided to use alternative software for sound, i.e. Adobe Premiere Pro and After Effects. Premiere Pro is suitable for making overall adjustments and

minor edits but both software packages served a practical purpose in the production of the film.

3.2. Testing Materials



(Left) Figure 14. Conceptual art of a scene in the airport using a sketchy, watercolour style. Doyeon Kim, digital sketch, 2019, Auckland

(Right) Figure 15. Conceptual art of a scene in the airport using a gouache painting style. Doyeon Kim, digital sketch, 2019, Auckland

While creating the concept art, I used a range of art styles with different materials and mediums. For example, to produce a nostalgic atmosphere, I created the backgrounds of the film in a digital environment and experimented with different styles of watercolour, sketching and others. Working with digital software was time-wise also more economical.

I felt that the watercolour style created too many difficulties in producing the right colours that were suitable for the atmosphere of a scene. It also required a large amount of time to complete (Figure 14 & 15). Therefore, I subsequently decided to produce gouache-like backgrounds using digital media. I believe that this particular style reflects similarities to cel animation as in, e.g. *Tom and Jerry*⁸³ and *Silly Symphonies*⁸⁴, works that are also often associated with the concept of nostalgia.

I intended to visualise mythical elements using a different art style that would contrast with how the main protagonist is portrayed. This would serve as a way of indicating how such elements were the product of the character's imagination, i.e. not real within the reality of the film. For example, while the background and the characters would be drawn in a gouache painting style, the mythical creatures and elements would be represented using a rougher, sketch-like style and a different colour scheme.

⁸³ Hanna et al., *Tom and Jerry*.

⁸⁴ Walt Disney Productions, *Silly Symphonies*.

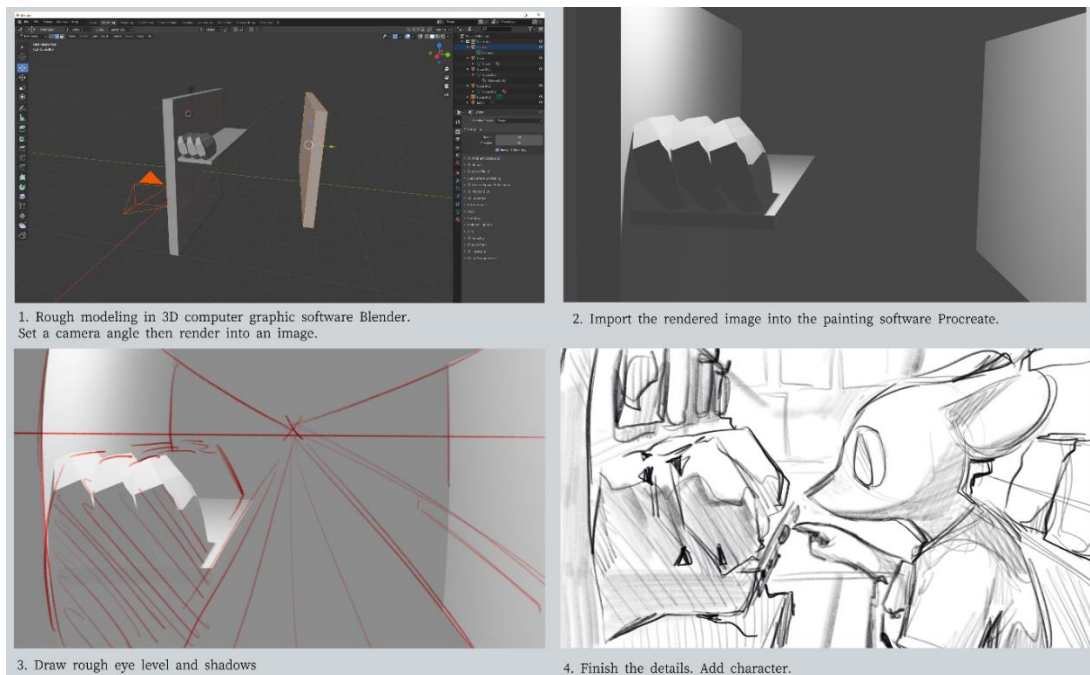
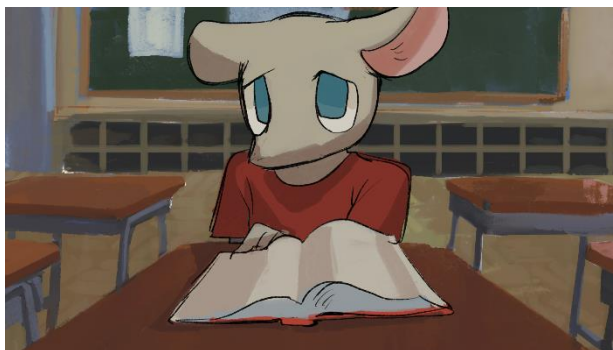


Figure 16. The step-by-step demonstration of creating a mixture of material sketch.
Doyeon Kim, digital image, 2019, Auckland

I also experimented with using simple 3D polygons to better understand the overall composition and eye levels that would structure a scene (Figure 16). An animated film I was inspired by was *The Triplets of Belleville*⁸⁵. A mixed-media approach, with 2D and 3D technology is utilised for its background. The film is primarily composed of 2D animations, however in some scenes, 3D modelled objects and characters are used. Throughout the planning process, I painted using the base colour before adding shadows and other details. This reduced the time required to work on the backgrounds of the film and, concurrently, ensured that my backgrounds were sufficiently clear to be interpreted by an audience.



⁸⁵ *The Triplets of Belleville*, directed by Chomet, Sylvain. (Diaphana Films, Tartan Films, 2003.)
DVD

Figure 17. Conceptual art which experiments on the final visual of the film. Doyeon Kim, digital art, 2019, Auckland

Using practice-based research, I also experimented using one of the scenes from my animatic to review its visual look using the gouache background and fully coloured characters (Figure 17). By doing this, I gained the impression that the main character looked quite flat compared to other components featured onscreen. To resolve this issue, I changed the style of the character's line art by incorporating strong pen pressure and a textured pen. This allowed me to create a more delicate line, while the rough, inky pen created the impression of a storybook illustration style.

3.3. Symbolism/Metaphor

Several scenes in my film incorporate the use of mythic symbolism and metaphors. I depicted aspects of mythological stories that I became familiar with throughout my childhood, such as the Pegasus. Furthermore, I researched comparative mythology (folklore) in the context of multiple cultures that might be expressed in my film.

Symbols/Metaphor



Figure 18. Sketch of the 'Pegasus in the library' scene. Doyeon Kim, digital sketch, 2019, Auckland

For example, I used the Pegasus, which commonly derives from Greek mythological tales, to symbolise the 'call to adventure' aspect of the hero's journey. In my film, Pegasus

delivers a key item to the protagonist, which, in turn, initiates his adventure into the imaginary world. During the scene in the library, Pegasus can be seen lying down with a golden egg on a nest (Figure 18). When the protagonist approaches the nest, Pegasus flies away, leaving the egg behind. Once the protagonist picks up the egg it “hatches” to reveal a film roll (Figure 19).

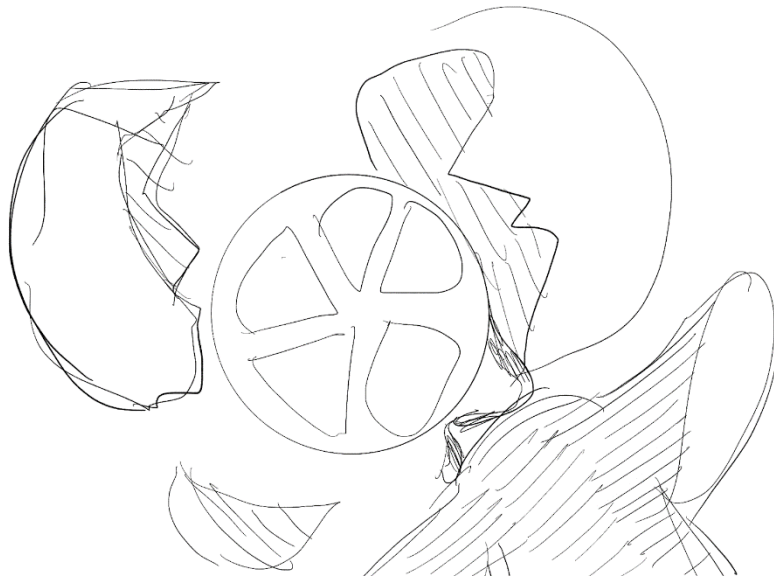


Figure 19. Sketch of the scene in which a film roll ‘hatches’ from the golden egg.
Doyeon Kim, digital sketch, 2019, Auckland

In this scene, I wanted to create a connection between Pegasus and the “horse with wings” that appears in Korean mythology as a comparative myth. The Korean myth follows an ancient king, Pak Hyeokgeose, who was born from a golden egg taken care of by a horse.

I also wanted to use the film roll to symbolise my experience of watching movies as a child. Through such media, I was able to adapt to a new culture and language relatively quickly. The symbols depicted in this scene convey how the golden egg that Pegasus leaves behind functions as a key item required for reaching the ‘challenge stage’ in the hero’s journey. The adventure that he will experience in his imagination allows the protagonist to test how brave he is in terms of becoming acculturated to a new environment.

3.4. Audio Processes

To develop a complex atmosphere in my film, I had to create comprehensively animated scenes that richly employed Foley sounds. To achieve this, I recorded myself as a reference and produced as many as possible Foley sounds. For example, for the Pegasus scene, I recorded the sound produced when crumpling paper and tested Foley sounds involving cracking eggshells. Then, I digitally modified the recordings to make them sound as realistic as possible. I included Foley and atmospheric sounds in my film because these can help to give rise to a sense of nostalgia. Specific sound effects can trigger nostalgic memories within the minds of audience members, sounds they may have heard as a child (e.g. the sound effects commonly used in cartoons).

Next, I created rough backgrounds in advance to observe where the audience's eye level would be when viewing the film and decided where to position my characters. Following on from this, I produced in-between animations for the characters. Once I had completed the character animation up to the lining and colouring stage, I began finalising the remainder of the background to see how the colour scheme of the scenes would look overall.

3.5. Future Producing

At the time of writing this thesis, the film remains a work in progress. I plan to continue including symbolic meanings related to mythical stories in the film's narrative to facilitate the protagonist's journey of gaining the courage to adapt to an unfamiliar culture, I want to experiment with using a 3D-modelled background. As already mentioned in Section 3.2, I have used 3D polygons during the compositing stage, which was further rendered with a cartoon shader, thereby creating additional options when using different camera techniques such as panning movement

Conclusion

This exegesis for my Master's research has focused on analysing hybrid myths, fables, and urban legends to create an original narrative. It is based on my childhood coming-of-age experiences and maturing from a child into an adolescent with a bicultural identity. To express these aspects, I aimed to create a 2D short animated film using anthropomorphic characters. My methods and methodology helped me to conduct practice-based research using an autoethnographic approach. Additionally, it assisted me in testing the thumbnails of my animated film and to conduct a contextual review of film references that could support my primary research ideas in more depth.

The development of my research progressed in a different direction from what I had initially anticipated. At the outset, I intended to illustrate a larger number of scenes that focused on the mythical and imaginative world created by the protagonist. However, as the research process advanced, I focused more on coming-of-age ideas. Despite this shift in focus, the development of my research nonetheless appears to have been successful for the production of my final animated film.

Due to the enormous amount of information and documents available for the study of mythology and folktales, I struggled to find ideas that were suitable and relevant to my particular research. I have, however, gained a better understanding of the rules of the hero's journey and learned that better character development helps create a fully developed story.

By researching the mythologies, fables, and folktales of different countries, I learned how important and significant they are to our daily and cultural lives. In addition, as it is a broadly developed topic, it encouraged me to continue my research in this area in more detail to support the production of my animated film. Similar to when I was a child, I still enjoy and appreciate mythological tales. Through my interaction with hybrid mythologies, I am inspired to explore new ideas that can be used in future research and projects.

Glossary

Key words		Page
Anthropomorphism	Technique endowing an animal with human-like characteristics.	2
Cerberus	A guard dog with multiple heads that lives in the underworld in Greek Mythology.	
Charon	A ferryman in Greek mythology who carries the souls of the dead across the river in the underworld.	40
Dokkaebi	A goblin which appears in the Korean folklores.	13
Epiphanies	Memorable experiences which impact the trajectory of a person's life.	29
Gamtu	Traditional Korean headwear.	14
Hades	King of the underworld in Greek mythology.	7
Mētis	Goddess of wisdom, prudence, and craft in Greek mythology.	
Minotaur	Greek mythological creature with a cow's head and a human body which lives inside a maze.	
Pegasus	A winged horse that appears in Greek mythology.	43
plasmaticness	A technique that is often used in animation and can frequently be observed in cartoons created during the 'golden age of American animation'. Adds a rubber or liquid-like property to the character's movement.	10
Umibōzu	A giant sea creature from Japanese folklore that attacks ships at times.	

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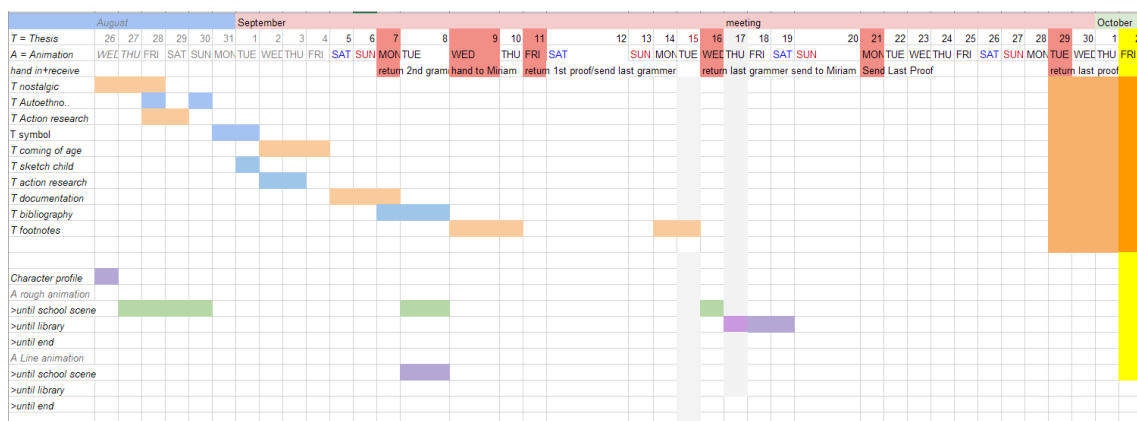
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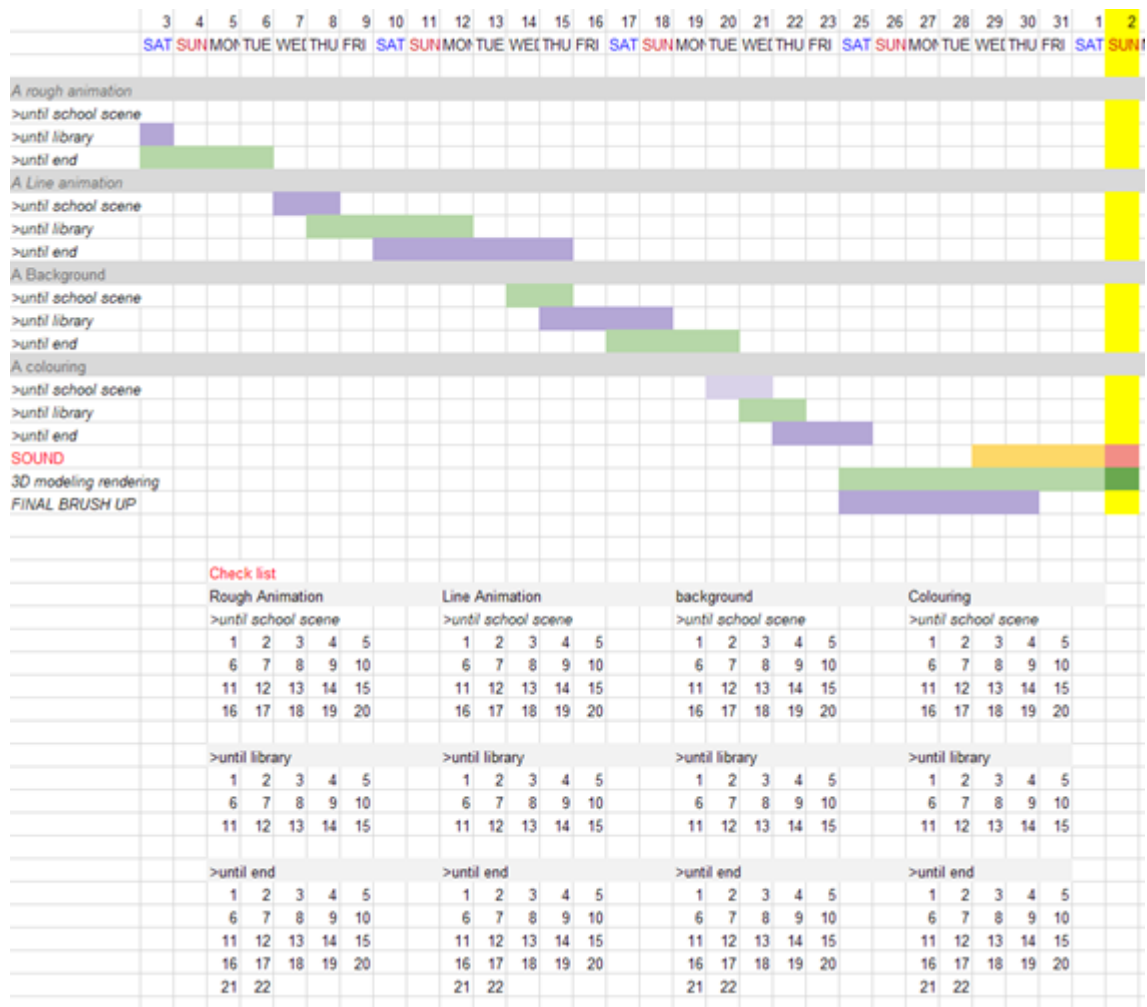
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Appendices

Figure 1

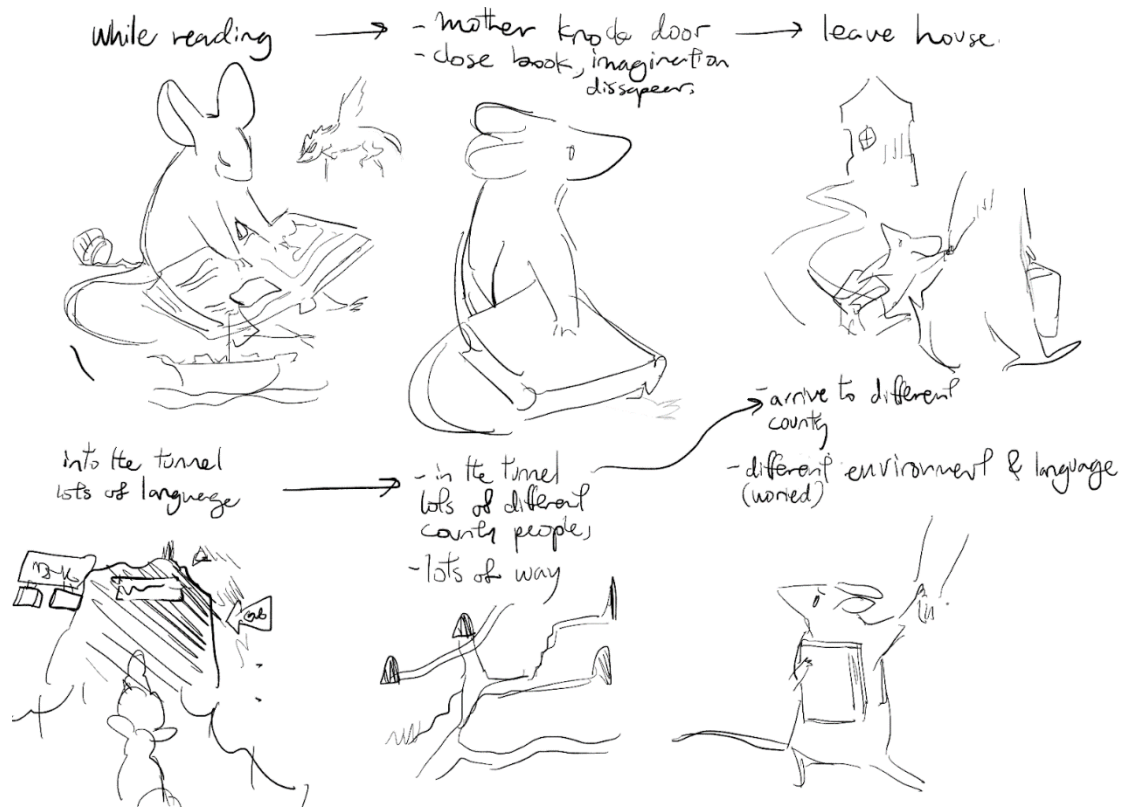




Note. Time schedule for the last 2 months created in Microsoft Excel. 2020

Prototype Story Script

- Figure 2



Note. Doyeon Kim. (2020). Preliminary sketch outlining the overall storyline of the film.

1. Arrive at the new home, He is unfamiliar with lots of very high apartments in one places. The first day of school - before going to school, the mother gave a little bit of pocket money. unfamiliar schoolbag shape. (figure 3) The student who lives around near area gathers in one place and then go to schools by groups. Very accurate on times at school

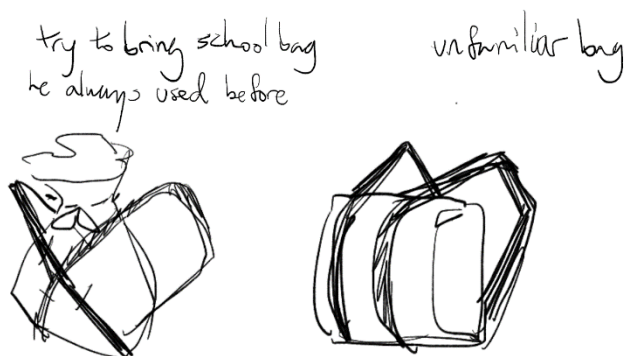


figure 3.

Note. Doyeon Kim. (2020). Possible designs for a school bag.

After school, try to go home, but don't know which building its apartment was. - Get lost in the building.

He gave up and got out of the apartment. Stomach rumbles take out the pocket money, an walk around outside to find a store to eat.

Arrived at the supermarket - found some food, however, cannot read the package so do not know what is inside there, or cannot find out the difference between similar foods.

Try to bring any food product and head to the counter, put the work and the money on the counter, however, the staff talks to the main character, but cannot understand what they want to say.

Cannot understand so feel like they are blaming at the main character, he gets scared.

The staff explain with a gesture; the main character finally understands that he did not have enough money to, but it felt embarrassing.

Later, he finished eating the food, sit on a bench in a small playground which is in the apartment area, looks up if he can see his mother somewhere the balcony of the rooms. Take out the Greek mythology book which he was taking around for the whole time. While reading, he starts to feel better and smile a bit, look around the playground and the apartment, it seems like the main character is in the Greek mythology tale. (Argo ship, golden apple, Cerberus etc.)

Suddenly the main character notices that one of the mythical creatures is walking to somewhere - he follows it.

He arrived at the library. So much unfamiliar language feels scared but keep following the creature.

At one corner, the main character realises that the language is familiar, and it is about Greek mythology. The main character. Open some book, realise there us an unfamiliar image of mythology creatures. The main character gets interested in the new mythology tales which it never saw. However, he cannot read the word.

Figure 4



Note. Doyeon Kim. (2020). Preliminary sketches further outlining the storyline.

The image on the book(human figure) points up the wall; the main character realises its late time. - quickly put back the book, a yarn ball fell from between the books (figure 4)

The ball roll down the floor, a crow with three legs (Yata-garasu), came and pecks the yarn ball, the yarn leaves the string on the floor.

The main character follows the string, ended up standing in front of its house apartment, the main character's mother is standing in front of the entrance.

From the next day, the main character keeps visit the library any time; the main character tries to understand what is written on the books. When he finishes reading a page, the creature on that page move and pop out from the book. When it becomes a time to leave to get home,
The main character still wants to read the book, but not brave enough to ask the librarian about renting.

When the main character turns back, there is a horse with wing sit at the middle of the library (Korean mythology Pak Hyeokgeose & Pegasus). It flew away. When the main character came closer, the egg hatches, and a movie film came out. The main character picks it up, realise that it is getting pulled to a direction, he follows where it gets removed.

Figure 5



Note. Doyeon Kim. (2020). Sketch of a scene idea.

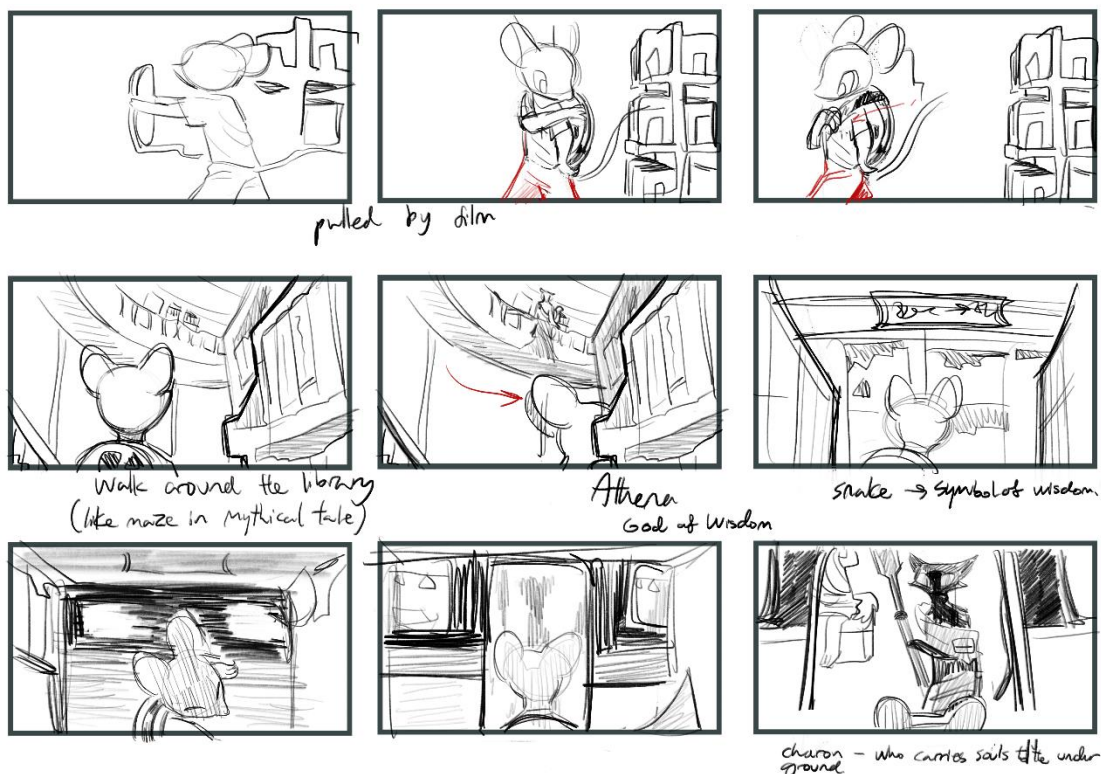
The ground suddenly cracks, and the main character drops down into the crack. Found out that its inside of a subway station. There is a big train map with a lot of routes to go, the main character takes a random train, and it goes to an aquarium. the main character keeps walk forward, and there are creepy mythological creatures in the water tank. (this relates to my nostalgic and traumatic memory)
The water tank is full of a big fish(thumbnail below left top image). The fish gets bigger and bigger, and the tank breaks, the water fills the scene, the main character is in the water, try to swim up to breath.

He realises that there are several holes in the area, with lots of signboard with an unfamiliar language. He looks around and find that there is one signboard that he can read, which says "entrance."

The main character gets into the hole and realises that there is a very long hallway which looks like a cinema. It is crowded with many mythological creatures, holding tickets and food and popcorn. The main character stands in front of the counter, the staff suggests a popcorn and drinks, the main character thinks for a while, then decline the suggest, and follow the crowd. During the hallway, there is a familiar door which looks like the main character's house entrance door; he gets into the room. The room was the cinema's projection room. The main character try put in his movie film roll into the film machine which he is carrying. The scene suddenly changed to the cinema room, which shows mythology tales (mainly Korea and Japan)and the main character is sitting at the audience seat to watch it. Around the main character, Greek mythology characters are watching the film together. After the film end, the main character slowly stands up from the scene, and the scene suddenly changes to the library, and the main character just stood up from the seat where he was reading the Japanese mythology book.

The main character tries to speak to the librarian how to borrow the book. In result, he succeeds to talk with them, and when the main character leaves the library, he feels more comfortable at being in the new place. He gets to speak with his classmate, buys what he need at the market, uses the train with comforts.

Figure 6



Note. Doyeon Kim. (2020). Additional scenes for the animatic.