

## The Art of “Including Art” in Animation: DreamWorks’ Intertextual Games for All

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### Abstract

Art forms become interrelated when intertextual phenomena occur. The choice of previous art forms to create humour may seem to be a playful game, but it is the result of many kinds of inserted messages. Fourteen animated feature films by DreamWorks have been analysed and classified in depth (by using Sebeok’s (1986) intertextual categories, which were also described by Hatim & Mason (1990)), in order to demonstrate how animation is an art that encompasses other artistic productions. Firstly, art and animation will be defined in order to, secondly, use the corpus to exemplify the intertextual connections from other art forms. Lastly, the final quantitative and qualitative results will substantiate the conclusion that these productions by DreamWorks are an example of artistic cinematographic intertextuality.

**Key words:** animation, intertextuality, art forms, Children’s Literature..

### Resumen

Las formas artísticas se interrelacionan cuando se pone en práctica el fenómeno intertextual. El uso de formas artísticas previas para crear humor puede parecer un juego pero es el resultado de la inserción de varios tipos de mensajes en un texto/discurso. Se analizan y clasifican en profundidad catorce películas de animación creadas por DreamWorks (se emplea para ello las categorías intertextuales propuestas por Sebeok (1986) descritas, a su vez, por Hatim & Mason (1990)), con el propósito de demostrar cómo la animación es un arte que engloba a otras producciones artísticas. En primer lugar, se definen los conceptos de arte y animación para, acto seguido, mostrar mediante el corpus cuáles son las conexiones intertextuales que provienen de otras formas artísticas. Los resultados cuantitativos y cualitativos permiten concluir que las producciones animadas de DreamWorks son un ejemplo de intertextualidad cinematográfica artística.

**Palabras clave:** arte, álbumes, museos, galerías, contexto.

### Resum

Les formes artístiques s’interrelacionen quan es posa en pràctica el fenomen intertextual. L’ús de formes artístiques prèvies per crear humor pot semblar un joc però és el resultat de la inserció de diversos tipus de missatges en un text/discurs. S’analitzen i classifiquen en profunditat catorze pel·lícules d’animació creades per DreamWorks (s’hi empra per a això les categories intertextuals proposades per Sebeok (1986) descrites, d’altra banda, per Hatim & Mason (1990)), amb el propòsit de demostrar com l’animació és un art que engloba d’altres produccions artístiques. En primer lloc, es defineixen els conceptes d’art i animació per a, tot seguit, mostrar mitjançant el corpus quines són les connexions intertextuals que provenen d’altres formes artístiques. Els resultats quantitatius i qualitius permeten concloure que les produccions animades de DreamWork són un exemple d’intertextualitat cinematogràfica artística.

**Paraules clau:** animació, intertextualitat, formes artístiques, literatura infantil i juvenil.

## Introduction

DreamWorks is part of the successful and popular media industry aimed at creating family entertainment. As the company states: “[...] with each film, we strive to tell great stories that are fun and comedic, told with a level of sophistication and irreverence that appeals to the broadest audience possible and captures the imaginations of all people regardless of age”. (DreamWorks Official Website, 2016, n. p.)

This company has produced more than twenty-five animated feature films in the last twenty years. This paper is centred on fourteen of these productions which deserve an analysis in depth due to the intertextual content they include. The following section will present the essential definitions which helped develop the descriptive analysis herein.

First and foremost, cinema cannot be defined without first defining art, since films are art forms (Balázs, 1978; Eisenstein, 1986; Garroni, 1973; Metz, 1977; and the Opojaz members Shklovski, 1971 and Tinianov, 1927 among others). From a philosophical point of view, one single definition cannot comprise all the meanings of art. Its totality cannot be encompassed by a global view, and many have interpreted the definition of art in several manners.

For explanatory reasons, a few definitions must be handled to understand the theoretical rationale used in this study. Hegel (1997, p. 17) defined art as the way through which the spirit manifests itself in a particular manner. Art, according to this philosopher, must make an idea accessible in order to be contemplated through the creation of images. These images will be an expression of our freedom. Heidegger (1988, p. 63) defined art as the manifestation of the truth, its becoming and happening. Art, then, can be understood as a language used to express a human beings’ physical and spiritual reality. This language captures what humans are surrounded by and then is interiorised. This action of “interiorisation” then emerges transformed into the artist’s free creation. Therefore, art is absolutely crucial for the human being because it is the expression of the human spirit.

The artist’s subjectivity is required to create art through his or her genius (ability to grasp the essence of the world). Inspiration, influenced by the exterior and the historical context, is the interior voice which triggers the need to create. The surrounding reality also conditions the creation of art since the artist is affected by it. Reality enriches the artist with knowledge, experience and feelings. It is objective as opposed to the final artwork. The conjunction of the artist’s subjectivity and reality (objectivity) is the artistic creation known as poiesis, which is the expression of artistic content. The combination of these three aspects, objectivity, subjectivity and poiesis results in the work of art.

Here, these "artists" belong to the cinematographic industry, specifically to animation. These creators have revisited other artworks, which are also part of reality, to create through the use of intertextuality each of the fourteen analysed narrations. It is a phenomenon which allows the introduction of texts, discourses, (and even physical objects created in the past) into a renewed present-time text, discourse, or physical object. This frequently involves reinterpretation of the past meaning in the new production since there is a creative reason (function) for making use of intertextuality.

Art is, as Benjamin (2017, p. 66) affirms, reproducible. In other words, it is replayed. Intertextual phenomena are of the same nature. It is a game for those capable of establishing ties to previous productions, and where playing with texts is the objective to create new messages for the audience. The above definitions of art also describe animated feature films, and this enables their analysis. In other words, by studying these feature films, one can discover how intertextual phenomena have been used in order to fulfil specific purposes.

**By affirming that cinema is an art, one can deduce that animation is also an art form. However, this statement had been unaccepted for a long time in the past. Just as real action filming took time to be considered art, animation also struggled in this endeavor.**

Cinema is an artistic form used to analyse reality, but also a game (Benjamin, 2017, p. 28). It is a means of entertainment as will be seen in the fourteen films studied herein. By affirming that cinema is an art, one can deduce that animation is also an art form. However, this statement had been unaccepted for a long time in the past. Just as real action filming took time to be considered art, animation also struggled in this endeavour. An example of this effort can be read in Solomon's anthology where this author affirms that "animation is finally emerging from decades of critical neglect and becoming accepted as a valid form of artistic expression" (Solomon, 1987, p. 12). In this same volume, Starr (1987, p. 70) declares that animation is a fine art which might "win recognition through hybridization with other arts". This has been observed in the analysed films herein.

Three more definitions of animation substantiate the development of this art, defined as a human production and technical challenge, continuously searching for new ways of expressing views. The general goals of animation can vary in real practice. The Association International du Film d'Animation defined Animation in 1962 in its statutes as:

The art of animation is the creation of moving images through the manipulation of all varieties of techniques apart from live action methods. This independent art, whatever its manner of expression –in theatres, on television, in education or children’s film, etc. -should make an extensive and important contribution to the world’s cultural heritage, while playing its part in the search for new ways of artistic expression. It should help to promote progress towards peace and mutual understanding between all people. (ASIFA, 2014, n. p.)

Animation is not only an art but also part of Children and Young Adult Literature as Oittinen (2000) argues, based on Lennart Hellsing (1963)’s concept of this literature:

Children’s literature is anything the child reads or hears, anything from newspapers, series, TV shows, and radio presentations to what we call books. If we take the child’s view into consideration, we could also include not just literature produced for children, but also literature produced by children themselves, as well as the oral tradition. Seen from a very wide perspective, children’s literature could be anything that a child finds interesting. (Oittinen, 2000, p. 62)

One may conclude from this quote that animated feature films can be considered ChL/YA Literature from the moment children watch or listen to audiovisual productions which attract their interest. Mínguez-López (2012a, p. 99 and p. 104) has also considered the need to include animation within a definition of ChL/YA due to the fact that it is highly inspired by canonised ChL. And, at the same time, animation can revitalise ChL, for example, by favouring the appearance of printed literature based on the plots and aesthetics created for the moving image. As this author affirms (Mínguez, 2012a, p. 103) the methodology applied to the study of ChL can also be used to describe animation which reveals a connection between both arts.

The technical approach to this art in terms of how it can be defined was proposed by Wells (1998, p. 10) who saw the need to go beyond those definitions, which dated back to the Latin origins of the word animation, the simple meaning of “giving life to”, and the permanent illusion of movement:

A film made by hand, frame-by-frame, providing an illusion of movement which has not been directly recorded in the conventional photographic sense. Although this is a definition which serves to inform conventional cel, hand-drawn and model animation, it has proven insufficient in the description of other kinds of animation, particularly the kinds of animation that have been facilitated by new technologies, chiefly those

images which are computer generated or subject to other kinds of pictorial manipulation.

Having defined animation, one can proceed to analyse from a theoretical point of view the intertextual phenomena included in the corpus in order to demonstrate the purposes of such usage.

### **1. Intertextuality as a Cinematographic Phenomenon**

It is essential to review the concept of 'intertextuality' in order to understand its use in cinema. Its origin dates back to 1969 although various researchers were attracted by this concept in the 80s (Ette, 1985; Hebel, 1989; Morgan, 1985; Pfister, 1985; Ping-Hui, 1983/84; Rulewicz, 1987). According to the semiologist, Julia Kristeva, who pioneered the coining of this term, texts can be built on a mosaic of quotes. Therefore, texts are the result of the absorption and transformation of another text: "Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least double (...)." (Kristeva, 1980, p. 66)

To Kristeva intertextuality takes place when various texts interact within a text (Kristeva, 1968, pp. 55-64, in Broich and Pfister, 1985, p. 7). To understand this text formed by many others, one must have knowledge about each of the texts it is composed of. Then, it must be all interpreted within the new one. This unique text formed from the many other texts produces a rupture between the included texts and the "new" text which includes them all. As Nikolajeva (1996) explains, there is "a clash between them and the present text" (p. 153). This 'matrioska' effect (a doll within a doll), i.e. a text within a text, makes it possible to obtain more content. However, it requires interpretation in order to understand the totality of the message transmitted in the text. Further understanding based on the reader's or spectator's cognitive skills is expected so as to perceive the intertextual phenomenon.

Intertextuality can be detected in animated feature films as seen in the results of this study. The artistic intertextual occurrences in these productions are plentiful. If cinema is art, so is animation. It contains other artistic manifestations which act as a "wink" from the director, producer or screenplay writer to the spectator, whether it is an animated film or not.

Focusing on cinema, Genette's comments on Woody Allen's 1972 film, *Play it again, Sam* (or in Spain's version, *Sueños de un seductor* (back translation: *Dreams of a Seducer*), and by the way, the translation of the title into Spanish discarded the intertextual game) is an example of how

intertextuality is used in films. In fact, Genette chose this example to coin the term (hyperfilmicity) to name the cases of cinematographic intertextuality.

The title of Woody Allen's film *Play it again, Sam* (1972) acts for film connoisseurs as a contract of cinematographic hypertextuality (hyperfilmicity). They recognize it as the most famous {misquoted} line from the Michael Curtiz film *Casablanca*, in which Humphrey Bogart asks the pianist at the bar to play for him, once more, "his" song. The tune is an emblem of Bogart's sacrificed passion Ingrid Bergman; it is the Vinteuil sonata of tough cinema. Allen's title itself can in turn be seen as emblematic of all hypertextual activity, for isn't it always a question of "replaying", in one ways or another, the same undying old song? (Genette, 1997, pp. 156-157)

The title of this production in English refers to the famous film *Casablanca* (1942), specifically to its script. But this is not the only reference, Herbert Ross (1972)'s production is based on Allen's successful Broadway theatre play, thus a series of intentionally-made connections were achieved in the process. This creative effect by which a present film re-enounces films produced in the past led to the labelling of the relation between films by Genette (1982). On the one hand, the hyperfilm, understood as the present film which includes references to other films, and on the other, the hypofilm, which are the set of texts that are re-enounced in the hyperfilm.

This cinematographic intertextuality is the result of a historical filmic trajectory originally developed from the realistic depiction of life in the 50s and early 60s; the intertextuality of the late 60s, 70s, 80s; to the representation of something by somebody, a cartoon, a model or its copy. In this way, cinema has reconsidered its original obsession of depicting reality to be considered, *per se*, a text as such. Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis explained this cinematographic transition with the following words:

Film theory thus gradually transformed itself from a meditation on the film object as the reproduction of pro-filmic phenomena into a critique of the very idea of mimetic reproduction. Film came to be seen as text, utterance, speech act, not the depiction of an event but rather an event in itself, one which participated in the production of a certain kind of subject. (Stam et al., 1992, p. 188)

Films transformed into texts and therefore their intertextual relation caught the attention of researchers, for example, the work by Pérez (2008, pp. 151-166) or that by Onega (1997). Moreover, both have separately worked on intertextuality by basing themselves on Genette's

classification of this phenomenon. It is noteworthy to highlight the fact that intertextuality has not only been used in cinema, but also has been a tool to help identify cinema as art:

The abovementioned voracity of early cinema to take in elements originating from all cultural expressions which were relatively close has made it mandatory to stop short at that undeniable phenomenon of intertextuality through which the new media shaped into an independent art flourishing its own means of expression. Among the cultural expressions in which cinema imbibed, the nineteenth century realist novel is without a doubt one of these as quoted by many scholars. But along with this, the important role of the feuilleton production carried out by the epigones of Romanticism must be mentioned as well as some theatrical shows such as melodrama and music-hall from late last century. One must not overlook the influence of paintings, another artistic style although dragged down by academic mores, previous to the impressionist revolution. (Pérez, 2008, pp. 152-153, my translation)

Inspired by Genette's categories of intertextuality, Stam et al. (1999, p. 236) have observed the possible coining of terms linked to film intertextuality. For example, that of 'celebrity intertextuality', which is the appearance in a film of a TV star or an intellectually artistic celebrity or an intellectual from any field. This celebrity intertextuality was also observed in the corpus as explained below.

Regarding film intertextuality and animation, it has been affirmed that film intertextuality as a phenomenon did not appear much in animation targeted towards the general public and specifically to children and young adults. As Chaume (2012, p. 148) stated: "According to Zabalbeascoa, audiovisual programmes aimed at children are expected to contain minimal levels of intertextuality than texts typically considered adult-oriented." Due to this, Chaume (2012) claimed the need to study the intertextual phenomena included in animated feature films and series targeted towards children and adolescents: "This claim calls for thorough empirical research, since many cartoons, children's and teen pics make constant use of intertextual references." (Chaume, 2012, p. 148)

Despite Zabalbeascoa's (2000) first assessment on the intertextual content included in animation, this same author contemplates this theme by analysing the appearance of certain intertextual elements in Disney's *Alladin*, which could only be targeted to the adult public according to the results of this author's paper.

The presence of verbal and non-verbal, acoustic and visual intertextual occurrences in films led Martínez (2008, p. 112) to consider the existence of audiovisual intertextuality in the form of

imitations, ways of speaking, mockery and quotes to other films, etc. They are the “references, throwbacks of literary works, songs, famous films, which are also important idiosyncratic cultural models.” (Mogorrón, 2012, p. 95, my translation) These have also been observed in the corpus analysed in this paper.

To end this theoretical section, it is of interest to note two fundamental characteristics regarding the use of intertextuality in animation; firstly, the awareness of a filmic production which interrelates artistic forms. As Selby (2013) affirmed:

In recent years historians of animation have established links between the art of animation and the main artistic movements, which have served to highlight all links of parallel concerns as well as to consolidate the view that animation has always been conditioned by the world it was surrounded by (Selby, 2013, p. 96, my translation);

secondly, the importance of the essential creative phases in animation. It is the so-called research phase in which animators achieve to reunite a series of materials that can be contrasted with other reliable sources for the verification of facts and key dates. It counts on the support of experts, who avoid the use of erroneous facts which can tarnish a script or a whole storyline. (Selby, 2013, p. 68)

This second characteristic has been observed in the inclusion of commentaries by the directors and producers in the studied animated feature film DVDs. This material reveals many of the intertextual relations, how these professionals were influenced by other arts, and, interestingly, the need to count on the opinions of psychologists, educators and even associations to suggest what content could be ideal for children and young adults.

## 2. The Practical Analysis

### 2.1. Objectives

This study is aimed to demonstrate that animation as an underrated art form among the research community (Yébenes, 2002, p. 84) is as worthy as any other by showing that animation is enriched by other artistic works. These artistic works belong to other fields (painting, literature, music hall) to develop a theme or an animated plot. The table below will show in detail which previously-created artistic content, introduced in a present-time work of art (i.e. intertextuality in animated feature films), has been alluded to and how. Furthermore, this study will demonstrate that the intertextual phenomenon spotted in these animated feature films can entertain a double audience (adults and children) despite past belief that intertextuality was not



common in animation. Yet, intertextuality in these occurrences has contributed to narrate DreamWorks stories. The final section will include the possible reasons why DreamWorks decided to have these artistic allusions in its productions.

## 2.2. Materials and Methodology

The study of artistic intertextuality in animated feature films requires the selection of a corpus which can be analysed and quantified. Among the extensive DreamWorks repertoire (more than twenty-five animated feature films in its twenty-two years of history), fourteen films have been selected: *Shrek* (2001); *Shrek 2* (2004); *Shark Tale* (2004); *Madagascar* (2005); *Over the Hedge* (2006); *Shrek the Third* (2007); *Bee Movie* (2007); *Kung Fu Panda* (2008); *Madagascar 2: Escape to Africa* (2008); *Monsters vs. Aliens* (2009); *Shrek, Happily Ever After* (2010); *Megamind* (2010); *Kung Fu Panda 2* (2011) and *Madagascar 3: Europe's most wanted* (2012). These films were originally chosen based on their huge success audience-wise. These animated feature films have been box office hits. This fact shows that audiences worldwide have had access to these stories. As a local example of this success, it might be of interest to know that these films have had an excellent reception in Spain. *Shrek's* total gross was almost EUR 13 million (€12,850,954), *Madagascar* totalled EUR 13,613,855 and *Shrek the Third* exceeded the 20 million figure (€21,828,103). *Kung Fu Panda's* total gross amounted to EUR 13,176,073<sup>1</sup>. This data reveals a major interest in animation among the Spanish audience. Moreover, these figures show how children are exposed to the media and to a specific content. This exposure to this type of animation rich in intertextual allusions most certainly has made an impact on viewers.

This corpus was compiled based on the following criteria: these films would have to be produced by the same company so that its discourse would be the same in the sense that its vision of reality and contents would be similar despite the variety of themes covered; each of these productions were to be created exclusively in the USA; these films would be computer-generated which is the company's most-often used technique; these productions would be classified under the same genre and subgenre, namely, all of them are animated feature films and comedies (other subgenres which allow the classification of animation are: Adventure, Family, Drama, Musical, Romance, Fantasy, Western, Action and Science Fiction). All these films are known as 'four quadrant' films although not all were rated as General Audience, being some of them not recommended for audiences under 7.

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<sup>1</sup> These figures have been extracted from the following websites: [www.cineol.net](http://www.cineol.net), [www.sensacine.com](http://www.sensacine.com) and [www.taquilladecine.com](http://www.taquilladecine.com).

This study has been carried out by implementing a methodology which allowed the analysis of each occurrence. These 14 films have been studied in their English original version with the aim of spotting the artistic intertextual references used in these films. The technical information was extracted from DreamWorks' film productions for the period 1998 to 2012 and then the corpus was selected based on the criteria described above. In order to spot the different cases of artistic intertextuality, each film was screened numerous times while data was being collected through transcription and classified into 528 data sheets. In total 1,271 minutes (more than 21 hours) were analysed. Faced with innumerable existing paradigms and classifications of intertextual phenomena, only one theoretical framework had to be selected in order to carry out the analysis of the different types of intertextuality included in the films analysed in this study. Sebeok's (*Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics*, 1986) classic model, which was also chosen by Hatim & Mason (1990, p. 132) in the field of Translation, has been summarised as follows: 1) Reference, 2) Cliché, 3) Literary allusion, 4) Self-quotation, 5) Conventionalism, 6) Proverb and 7) Meditation. As a result of the PhD study on animated feature film, *La alusión como fuente de creación de humor y su traducción: análisis del cine de animación de DreamWorks (2001-2012)* (Allusion as a Source of the Creation of Humour and its Translation: DreamWorks' Animated Feature Films 2001-2012) the third category referring to literary allusion has been modified to include a broader audiovisual allusion. This intertextual phenomenon has been observed in the 14 animated feature films by DreamWorks. Furthermore, the audiovisual allusions have been categorised based on this deductive, practical analysis. Special attention has been paid here to artistic allusions. These are defined as references to live show creations (a play made into a film, a musical, and circus show), paintworks, sculptures, photographs including architectural productions and their authors, dance and its styles, comedians, designers, martial arts and even culinary ones.

To locate intertextual occurrences in the corpus, two sources were extremely helpful: Firstly, the IMDB data base online, where comments about the contents used in each of the films have been accurately described, and secondly, the producers' and directors' comments, which are included in the films' DVDs detailing the influences and homage intended with their work. Many of these comments reveal important intertextual information which otherwise might be obscure for a researcher unaware of popular culture.

The creation of a data sheet for each occurrence helped organise the information extracted from the films thus favouring the quantitative and qualitative analyses, which have been later presented in the table and description below. This visual representation is useful to reveal how art has been included in these productions.

This methodology has proven to be suitable for the aims of this study since a significant number of results have been obtained with regard to how intertextuality has been created by re-enouncing artistic contents created in the past and to be included in an art form such as animation.

## 2.3. Results

### 2.3.1. Quantitative Analysis

The total number of compiled occurrences from the 14 DreamWorks animated feature films amounted to 745 out of which 33 belong to the artistic category. This represents 4.42% of the total figure of intertextual occurrences used in these productions. Although this figure is rather

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low, the fact that the artistic content has been restricted to a limited set of categories as described above must be recalled. This low figure also allows a deep analysis of the occurrences extracted from the corpus.

Also, Cinematographic, Literary, and Musical intertextual references belong to the arts as well, which must be considered, but here these have been studied separately. The table presented below shows in which of these films intertextual artistic references have been included and the compiled total number:

Film	Occurrences/Film
SHREK (SH1)	4
SHREK 2 (SH2)	5
SHARK TALE (ST)	0
MADAGASCAR (M1)	0
OVER THE HEDGE (OVT)	0
SHREK THE THIRD (SH3)	6
BEE MOVIE (BM)	2
KUNG FU PANDA (KFP1)	4
MADAGASCAR 2 (M2)	3
MONSTERS VS. ALIENS (MVSA)	0
SHREK: HAPPILY EVER AFTER (SH4)	3
MEGAMIND (MGM)	2
KUNG FU PANDA 2 (KFP2)	1
MADAGASCAR 3 (M3)	3
CORPUS TOTAL FIGURE	33

As seen, the *Shrek* saga is the richest in artistic occurrences (18) concentrating the highest number of cases, followed by the *Madagascar* saga (6), and the *Kung Fu Panda* saga (5). Films

such as *Shark Tale*, *Madagascar*, *Over the Hedge*, and *Monsters vs. Aliens* show no occurrences of this type although they do include other intertextual references.

### 2.3.2. Qualitative Analysis

Due to the fact that the results obtained have been manageable in terms of quantity there is room for a detailed discussion about the nature of these artistic intertextual references. As presented in the table above, occurrences have been spotted in 10 of the 14 studied films. These cases will be described per film as follows.

Four cases were compiled in *Shrek*. The first has to do with Shrek's fighting scene in Duloc. He shouts to the audience: "Thank you! Thank you very much! I'm here till Thursday. Try the veal!" (Time Code Reference (TCR): 00:24:12) which makes reference to the type of sentences said by stand-up comedians from the 70s and 80s as part of the Brick Wall comedy shows. The second artistic intertextual reference is a wink to the famous portrait by Botticelli (1445-1510) *Nascita di Venere* although in this imitation Lord Farquaad has substituted Venus (TCR: 00:46:55). The third occurrence has to do with the Merry Men's Riverdance dance (TCR: 00:50:08). Robin Hood's men dance this traditional Irish dance which is a contrast due to the setting and time of this film (medieval times in an animated feature film where ogres and fairies lead the main roles). To end the artistic allusions found in this film, the Three Pigs' break dance exhibition is an anachronistic game which definitely creates a humorous situation (TCR: 01:19:13).



**Image 1: Lord Farquaad lying in bed. Behind, as his headboard, Botticelli's subverted version of the triptych *Nascita di Venere***

*Shrek 2* plays with the image and pose of a well-known eighties extravagant model, Angelyne (TCR: 00:11:18), but instead of this model we will see the Fairy godmother placed on this billboard imitating the model's pose.



**Images 2 and 3: Angelyne and Fairy Godmother's billboards**

This film also includes a portrait of Queen Elisabeth II (TCR: 00:17:52) and visual references to the famous huge eyes portrayed by Gig in his paintings here seen in Puss in Boots big-eye expression (TCR: 00:36:13). Ballet has also been reproduced in the scene where two workers are transformed into ballerinas from the *Swan Lake* thanks to Shrek's visit to the Fairy Godmother's laboratory (TCR: 00:45:04). *Shrek 2* also includes irony by using a joke from Lewis Black, which criticises globalization and capitalism by discussing why Starbucks Coffee Shops (in this film Farbucks, named after Far Far Away kingdom's capital city) are everywhere and have several premises in the same street (TCR: 01:07:43).



**Image 4: Donkey on the onion carriage in front of Farbucks Coffee Shop**

Shrek the Third includes a scene where Gingy criticises Prince Charming's performance, comparing it to what the cookie qualifies as cheesy. Gingy, in fact, mentions the theatre play, *Love Letters* (TCR: 00:01:12), in the English version of the film. This film uses the motif of a scenario as a set where to place Prince Charming's feelings of revenge. The film begins with a play and it also ends with a theatrical representation. This environment is the perfect excuse to include references to the musical genre with sarcastic scenes recalling Broadway musicals in at least two different scenes (TCR: 00:56:56). Changes in food recipe names have also been compiled in this film: spicy chicken wings, pickled onions and crunchy fish fingers, all of them

typical in some bars and restaurants, have been renamed to spicy dragon wings, pickled eyes and crunchy kid fingers, respectively (TCR: 00:13:43).

*Bee Movie* is an example of the constant reference game with the bee world. For this reason, there is one food reference to Cheerios, cereal with honey (TCR: 00:01:36). Surprisingly, this film is rich in references to celebrities ('celebrity intertextuality'), including famous designers such as Ralph Lauren, who was mentioned as Barry's clothes designer at some point (TCR: 00:59:24).



**Images 5 and 6: Two examples of celebrity intertextuality: Bee Larry King and her honour judge Winfrey**

*Kung Fu Panda* includes references to martial arts. The film's title is a reference to a type of art of self-defence. At least five specific Kung Fu techniques reflecting how animals move have been alluded to by introducing these animals as main characters of the film: Snake, Monkey, Grasshopper and Tigress (TCR: 00:07:18). There is another intertextual reference related to the arts in this film, i.e., the combination of a panda bear's proportions with those of men, imitating or adapting to the animal world Da Vinci's *L'uomo Vitruviano* (TCR: 00:37:22).



**Image 7: A panda bear is the centre of Da Vinci's Vitruviano in Kung Fu Panda. Grasshopper uses it as a reference book to use acupuncture to heal Po**

In *Madagascar 2*, Alex, the lion, is a great fan of Broadway musicals and, for this reason, one can spot at least two clear examples of these references in his dialogues with other animals and even with his body movements. He mentions at some point (TCR: 00: 36: 39) that he is a protégé of Fosse and Robbins, two famous choreographers, and his dances imitate the steps of some of the characters in *West Side Story* (1961).

Art continues to be referred to in *Shrek: Happily Ever After*. A story book initiates the film as homage to Disney's classic opening scenes of fairytales read by a narrator. In one of those pages Shrek and Fiona appear in a picture kissing each other while posing in the same way as in Klimt's famous portrait, *Der Kuss* (1907-1908), *The Kiss* (TCR: 00:04:01). This film also includes witches who can do break dance (TCR: 00:49:38). Meanwhile, there are ogres who are kidnapped by Piper while they dance to the style of John Travolta's *Saturday Night Fever* (TCR: 00:59:43).

In *Megamind*, *La Gioconda* (1503-1519) appears twice among a set of portraits which were vandalised and stolen from Metrocity's Museum of Art by Megamind (TCR: 00:42:36). Also, this character imitates Michael Jackson's Moonwalk dance moves while listening to the *Bad* theme at the end of the film (TCR: 01:20:46).

Another film in the corpus that includes artistic intertextual references is *Kung Fu Panda 2*, which has used the universe of martial arts as a source, both visually by reproducing the aesthetics as well as colours and content-wise by reproducing certain aspects related to the mythology of Martial arts (TCR: 00:18:02): heroes, weapons, philosophy...



**Image 8: Po, the panda bear, sitting with the rest of the main cast of the Kung Fu Panda saga. Each character represents different kung fu fighting styles**

*Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted* is the last film which is included in the analysed corpus here. In this film two artworks have been used as reference. First, Dali's *The Persistence of Memory* (1931) and second Magritte's *The Empire of Light* (1950) (TCR: 00:01:42). These two works of art were used in these films to be seen in Alex's nightmare. However, only a few

elements were taken from these masterpieces, one of Dali's clocks and a streetlamp from Magritte's work. The producer's and director's comments about this scene mention how these objects were chosen to represent Alex's worries about not returning home. According to these comments, these objects were to be interpreted as a subliminal message about anxiety and fear. The last case studied makes indirect reference to the Cirque du Soleil. There is no direct reference to this circus in the script, but Alex, whose voice is characterised by Ben Stiller, literally says: "That's what everybody thought, Vitaly, until those French Canadians came along, drunk off from their maple syrup and cheap pharmaceuticals, and completely flipped the paradigm." (TCR: 00:46:02). DreamWorks' directors and producers affirmed that the film wanted to make a joke in the sense that if in the Cirque du Soleil there are no animals, in DreamWorks' circus there are no human artists.

**An overall analysis confirms that all these references were visually made available to the audience. In other words, these artistic allusions were included in each scene to be seen. In fact, only five of the total number of artistic references was uttered by DreamWorks' characters. This might be due to the fact that the company is placing intertextuality at a second place in the filmic discourse. Audiences must pay close attention to images to grasp the intertextual game.**

As seen, this collection of data reveals the art forms intertextually introduced in animation. An overall analysis confirms that all these references were visually made available to the audience. In other words, these artistic allusions were included in each scene to be seen. In fact, only five of the total number of artistic references was uttered by DreamWorks' characters. This might be due to the fact that the company is placing intertextuality at a second place in the filmic discourse. Audiences must pay close attention to images to grasp the intertextual game.

This intertextual game is meant to entertain all audiences. Adults are thrilled by their ability to spot these allusions in their new context and children, who might not be able to spot the game, will ask for clarification once they come across these references and/or when they see the adult's reaction towards the use of intertextuality. While adults fully enjoy the game, children are learning more about reality through animation and having fun as well. It is a game for all. The nature of the artistic intertextual references found in the corpus is quite rich. References to paintings, theatre plays, dance, martial arts, the Broadway musical genre and popular artists can be interpreted as a will to include several dimensions of art connecting our knowledge about the world with the art of animation.



If analysed in detail, most of the references pertain to painting. On the one hand, some of the paintings have been slightly modified to exchange famous portrayed characters for DreamWorks' to play with reality. For instance, Lord Farquaad substitutes Venus in Botticelli's masterpiece. Fiona and Shrek kiss in the same posture as Klimt's couple and Po, the panda, is the centre image of Vinci's *L'uomo Vitruviano*. On the other hand, some of the paintings have remained untouched in the corpus, such as the Mona Lisa and Queen Elisabeth II's portrait. As for the use of painting references in animation, some constituent elements belonging to well-known works of art have been reproduced, for example, Dali's clocks and Magritte's streetlamps. Undoubtedly, artistic references in these animated feature films can be included in many different ways.

Dance as an art form also gained importance in the obtained results. What is more, paintings and dance references alike constitute most of the spotted references. An eclectic combination of references to popular dances was recorded. Modern and classic references appeal to most audiences, who are bound to recognise River Dance routines among Robin Hood's Merry Men in *Shrek*, and Michael Jackson's Moonwalk in *Megamind*. These allusions emphasise the importance of dance and music in the cinematographic industry as well as in animation.

### **3. The Purpose of Artistic Intertextual References in these DreamWorks' Animated Feature Films and their relation with Children**

As part of the media industry, DreamWorks probably pursues two main objectives: firstly, the entertainment of the possible highest number of spectators, which leads, as a consequence, to the second objective, financial gain.

Yet, this in-depth analysis of the artistic intertextual content included in fourteen of DreamWorks' animated productions deserves a few remarks on the purpose of this content. Lorenzo (2005, pp. 136, 139 and 140) enumerates three main functions of audiovisual intertextuality: the humoristic function, as a discourse builder and the appellative function (as part of the advertising genre). Out of these three types this study reveals that DreamWorks' use of intertextuality is meant to make the audience laugh and look for what director's have named as 'Easter eggs', i.e., content that has been introduced to be spotted and looked for on purpose. It is not only a subtle message or game between the filmmaker and the spectator; directors encourage viewers in the DVD's comments to search for this special content.

This game plays a subversive role since it introduces these artistic references which belong to the artistic canon to create humour and to parody human production. Hutcheon (1987) describes postmodernism as the multiple interpretations of art. As this author sees it, we

constantly revise human production in our “new” creations to subvert the established canon of knowledge. In this constant relation between texts of the past and the present Hutcheon defines parody as:

Parody is a sophisticated genre in the demands it makes on its practitioners and its interpreters. The encoder, then the decoder, must effect a structural superimposition of texts that incorporates the old into the new. Parody is a bitextual synthesis (...), unlike more monotextual forms like pastiche that stress similarity rather than difference. In some ways, parody might be said to resemble metaphor. Both require that the decoder construct a second meaning through inferences about surface statements and supplement the foreground with acknowledgement and knowledge of a backgrounded context. (Hutcheon, 2000, pp. 33-34)

**This game plays a subversive role since it introduces these artistic references which belong to the artistic canon to create humour and to parody human production**

An example of this subversion was observed by Mínguez, Ballester and Oltra (2004, pp. 586-603) and Mínguez-López (2012b, pp. 249-262) who studied DreamWorks’ parody and subversion of the traditional Disney fairytale canon in the Shrek saga by analysing the classic canon and the subversion applied to it.

This intertextual game addressed to the general audience also fulfils a didactic purpose since adults react to the use of intertextuality by laughing at the messages included in the film, and if these adults are enjoying these films with younger viewers, these young viewers will probably feel curious about the humorous reaction of the first. In a way, children will ask why adults are laughing at some scenes when intertextuality is used. Moreover, as Beeler (2015, p. 28) affirms adults are also the mediators who supervise and attend public venues with the youngest audiences which means that if adults enjoy and find appropriate certain productions by a company, any animated feature film produced by it will very likely become a box office hit. The use of intertextuality will also serve to quiz the viewer about their knowledge creating the second type of interaction that Norrick (1993, pp. 43-44) described as a test. Intertextual humour “tests the capacity of the audience to interpret humour based on allusions”. (Norrick, 1993, p. 44)

#### **4. Conclusions**

As this paper has discussed, animation is an art which includes other art forms. It is for all audiences despite the belief that it is only addressed to children and young adults. The inclusion of art within art is closely related to intertextuality since this phenomenon consists of reusing

previous "texts" in the creation of another. Here, "texts" should go beyond the printed document, and text creation should be interpreted as the elaboration of a message/discourse in any format.

For this reason, intertextuality can be found in films and in animation. In order to tell a story in a film there is a need to create a narration that can be formed as a result of texts created in the past, for instance, artistic productions. Through parody DreamWorks legitimises and subverts that which it parodies. Parody signals how these works of art from the past become part of the present time leading to ideological consequences which derive from continuity and difference. In a way, from the postmodernist point of view the audience is given the chance to rethink human artistic productions and become critical with the products they consume.

To demonstrate that animation can include artistic intertextual references, an in-depth analysis has been carried out to extract these cases and identify which artistic productions have been referred to. Fourteen films were studied obtaining a total number of 33 occurrences which might seem rather few. However, this analysis only searched for the categories related to the Plastic Arts, the musical hall genre, theatre and dance, while the study of other art forms such as cinematographic, literary (López González, 2017, pp. 89-104) and musical productions have not been included here. These have also been used as artistic intertextual references in these films, but they have been included in separate studies due to the word limit here.

The use of these artistic intertextual references fulfils the need to create unexpected situations which trigger humour if the spectator reads in-between the lines. Of course, the young audience might not be able to spot all the references included in these films. They will only probably understand this subtle humour after some years of formal education and cultural training. In fact, the total number of cases per film discussed above reveals that the artistic content used is quite universal. The masterpieces alluded to are already part of popular culture. In a way, everyday life experiences within Western society will help distinguish these references. In this process, adults work as mediators who help the child in the understanding of this humour. Therefore, animation acts as more than entertainment, since it can transfer cultural content and, as a consequence, it can indirectly fulfil

**Therefore, animation acts as more than entertainment, since it can transfer cultural content and, as a consequence, it can indirectly fulfil a didactic purpose. Animation, then, is a resource which has not been adequately exploited at its full potential in the classrooms.**

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This compilation of artistic intertextual references also opens a new research line related to possible classroom didactic applications. There is a higher likelihood that young children will be interested in art if it is part of animation than if it is taught through traditional art handbooks. Yet, this hypothesis must be tested first through a reception study.

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