

REFLECTIVE PIECE:

To summarise my end opinion of my animation - I'm extremely pleased with the outcome given its narrow timeframe, but the issues with my existing animation style are now more obvious to me than ever.

Working heavily from the original storyboard, I managed to animate all of the shots I had planned. The idea of removing any felt too disruptive to the initial setup, and adding any completely new shots was unfeasible given the heavy time constraints. However, time spans for shots were often adjusted, though I had set up the storyboard to be loose in that aspect (often setting a long shot time to ensure all actions/information are conveyed, then reducing times for better pacing). As such, all the minimalist-style shots were also included; the flash-bang scene in particular turning out the best in my own opinion. Allowing these to be kept in (and keeping them essential to the overall narrative) helps distinguish this animation from my previous examples by solidifying its 'experimental' status and challenging my monotonous approaches used before (Wells 1998 p.45). And by again sticking to the original plan, none of these will hopefully feel wrong or disruptive to other viewers.

At current, my drawing style is admittedly weak regarding characters and their visual variety – however I believe that aspect in itself helps contribute to the theme of ambiguity I originally wanted to use in this project – where allegiances to good or evil cannot easily be 'guessed'. Nevertheless I still took advantage of deliberate design choices whenever possible to reinforce the vagueness; most notably with colour – for instance, the protagonist's grey clothing is indicative of a 'neutral' stance; while the antagonists, despite being hostile, dominantly wear blue, which I personally believe drew connotations with police operatives (and the inherent 'good' status they reserve). The setting's role in emphasising the ambiguity was also downplayed due to work restrictions, but with the simplified backdrops it will preserve existing ambiguities at the very least, meaning that audiences will again have to come to their own interpretation of the story and its characters (Wells 1998 p.44).

In regards to the established animation principles (and my test animation in Week 2), I aimed to give my characters anticipation and 'follow through' elements whenever possible, mainly through manipulating tween eases and adding 'rebound' motions to convey a sense of momentum and smoother flow to moving limbs. Since I admittedly don't have much patience for creating true 'frame by frame' animation, all these motions rely on complex tween and bone riggings – and while this has worked fine for me so far, it is becoming crystal clear just how limiting this approach is; and reminds me of the notion from Webster (2005 p.144) – that the difference between characters "that make good illustrations" and those "suitable for character animation" is very large indeed, so for future projects it may finally be time to significantly alter my approach.

Due to other university assignments taking up the majority of potential animation time, sticking to the set production schedule fell apart pretty quickly; with most work having to be pushed back to the last two weeks. As a result,

the final production is a tad rushed (core animation, lip synching, shading and sound editing all only being finished on the final day). However, for the most part I am extremely happy with the final result, as the vast majority of my intended elements made it into the final cut and luckily proved to work without too many issues. The only element I did not get a chance to work on at all was shading the characters (having them only flat colours compared to the more detailed backgrounds) – I instead compensated by adding a dark gradient overlay on the top and bottom edges of the screen to hopefully add some ‘subtle’ variety. I also would have preferred to give voice acting another go – given my inherent dislike for the sound of my recorded voice and having little ‘acting’ experience, the lines do seem a bit flat in tone and delivery, despite multiple attempts at each line and trying to allow myself to get into character out loud on the recording day.

So, it hasn’t been an easy production by any means – if conditions had been more ideal I could have tweaked more elements or experimented more – but judging from my original animation vision I feel I’ve successfully achieved what I proposed to create.

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