Design of Letters in Posters and Main Titles of Disney Imaginary

Diseño de letras en carteles y cabeceras del imaginario Disney

Design de letras em pôsteres e títulos principais do imaginário da Disney

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Abstract

In this article, we analyze letters designs of Disney imaginary from visual culture. We investigate the styles that have supposed some of the most emblematic productions of this film producer, as a consequence as sample they are chosen 12 representative films of the 60 titles of Disney Classics set. Using a case study we developed a comparative to find out visual messages made with letters have clearly penetrated collective imagination. Communication and technology go together in this stylistic evolution. We also provide an educational perspective on the subject, attending to our involvement in training teacher, offering a detailed examination of posters and credits. We believe that this material can be useful to better understand the influence of Disney sensibility on successive generations of audiences. Disney's power in the media directly affects our reception of classical literature, something that is maintained in every process or change that happens, since Disney has demonstrated for a century its ability to adapt to technological uses and currents aesthetic. The letters of the Disney iconography offer us an exclusive catalog of adaptation to fashions from constant innovation in its ideological, aesthetic, technological, communicative and cultural proposals.

Key Words: *Cinema; Design; Alphabet; Posters; Visual Cuture; Disney*

Resumen

En el presente artículo analizamos los diseños de letras del imaginario Disney desde la cultura visual. Indagamos en los estilos que han marcado algunas de las producciones más emblemáticas de esta productora de cine, para lo cual se seleccionan como muestra 12 filmes representativos de los 60 títulos que componen la colección Clásicos Disney. Abordamos la cuestión desde una revisión estilística, estudiando las características formales y observando el papel de cada diseño en su coyuntura histórica, mediante un estudio de caso, analizando de qué modo comunicación y tecnología se dan la mano en esta evolución estilística. También aportamos una componente educativa, atendiendo a nuestra implicación en la formación de docentes, ofreciendo un examen detallado de los carteles y los títulos de crédito. Consideramos que este material puede resultar de utilidad para comprender mejor en influjo de la sensibilidad Disney en las sucesivas generaciones de públicos. El poder de Disney en

los medios afecta directamente a nuestra recepción de la literatura clásica, algo que se mantiene en cada momento, ya que Disney ha demostrado durante un siglo su capacidad de adaptación a los usos tecnológicos y las corrientes estéticas. Las letras de la iconosfera Disney nos ofrecen un catálogo exclusivo de adaptación a las modas desde la constante innovación en sus propuestas ideológicas, estéticas, tecnológicas, comunicativas y culturales.

Palabras clave: *Cine; Diseño; Alfabeto; Carteles; Cultura Visual; Disney*

Resumo

Neste artigo, analisamos os desenhos tipográficos do imaginário da Disney a partir da perspectiva da cultura visual. Investigamos os estilos que marcaram algumas das produções mais emblemáticas deste produtor de filmes, para as quais selecionamos 12 dos 60 títulos que compõem a coleção Disney Classics. Abordamos a questão estudando características formais e analisando o papel de cada projeto em sua conjuntura histórica. Desenvolvemos um comparativo que nos permite descobrir até que ponto essas mensagens visuais feitas com letras penetraram claramente na imaginação coletiva. Comunicação e tecnologia andam de mãos dadas nesta evolução estilística. Também fornecemos uma perspectiva educacional sobre o assunto, atendendo ao nosso envolvimento na formação de professores, oferecendo um exame detalhado de pôsteres e créditos. Acreditamos que este material pode ser útil para entender melhor a influência da sensibilidade da Disney nas gerações sucessivas de audiências. O poder da Disney na mídia afeta diretamente nossa recepção da literatura clássica, algo que é mantido em todos os processos ou mudanças que acontecem, uma vez que a Disney demonstrou por um século sua capacidade de se adaptar aos usos e correntes tecnológicas estético. As cartas da iconografia da Disney nos oferecem um catálogo exclusivo de adaptação às modas da inovação constante em suas propostas ideológicas, estéticas, tecnológicas, comunicativas e culturais.

Palavras chave: *Filmes; Projeto; Alfabeto; Cartazes; Cultura visual; Disney*

1. Introduction

Visual culture can be described as information conveyed using still or moving imagery which is brought together to form a common collective imaginary (Duncum, 2015; Hernández, 2010). As a producer of audivisual animations, Disney approaches the concept of visual culture from its perspective of production and release of feature films globally, contributing to the education of successive generations (Lobovikov-Katz, 2019).

Disney uses its productions to convey values linked to a specific ideology. These tend towards a conservative mindset, which uses a combination of religious and political conventions, deriving from the social principles of heteropatriarchy which has been characteristic of the North American population from the beginning of the Twentieth Century (Cantillo, 2011, 2015). Throughout the century, this Disney symbolism has reached a wide audience through its feature films, the enduring messages being the prevention of progress towards knowledge of and respect for otherness (Barber, 2015). Disney has also been able to exercise its influence in the educational sector, often reflected in university syllabuses (Castro-Martinez & Diaz-Morilla, 2019).

The influence of Disney's imaginary on the education of several generations also constitutes a strong social and communications framework (Foucault, 1998), a cultural magma which integrates people from all age groups and social backgrounds (Briggs & Burke, 2002). Many critiques have been made about the communicative power of Disney as a genuinely reactionary brand (Giroux, 2001). Ultimately it's about an established authority which affirms that control of the principle communications conglomerates continues in the hands of a select group of western countries. Thus its messages continue to contribute to the dissemination of economic, political and hegemonic cultural models (Vaquerizo Domínguez, 2020). We must have the capacity to use this imaginary to reconsider the validity of this perspective with regard to educational artistic practice (Irwin & O'Donoghue, 2012), and reflect on the educational and heritage issues (Huerta, Domínguez & Barbosa, 2017).

Based on the influence exercised by the powerful communications Disney "Empire", we have explored how the component parts in some of its most charismatic productions have developed (Frutiger, 2007). We have opted to focus on the properties and ramifications of letters on the posters and credits used for its movies (Huerta, 2020). Regarding letters, we have explored elements of the typography and calligraphy used, designs which ultimately allow us to identify the Disney classics, which were created to last.

This is in fact how it has been. Decades after the brand was first established and the first work released, the type of lettering used in its productions continue to work for consumers of all ages (Groupe μ, 1992). We know and recognise Disney productions, as we recognise a logo such as "Coca-Cola" or that of Disney itself, and this comes from the signature of the creator of this empire (Freitas, Coutinho & Waetcher, 2013). The calligraphy of the signature of Walt Disney himself has become etched on our minds (Nake & Grabowski, 2017). The decisive strokes of the logo define the dynamic way in which Disney has evolved, adapting and continually incorporating new technology and communications.

2. Research objectives

Our aim was to evaluate aspects of form and content which identify the Disney imaginary from a visual culture approach. For this purpose we focussed on the design of posters and credits, reviewing the letters used and analysing this work diachronically (Barthes, 1986). This allowed us to evaluate its capacity to adapt, given that the company has generated a very powerful visual mythology during the course of a century (Debord, 1967).

Thereafter we explored the educational possibilities of the study, evaluating how to incorporate these issues in the training of teaching professionals (Sancho-Gil & Hernández, 2018). What does Disney attempt to convey with the types of lettering used in its movie posters and credits? How does a cultural sector influence the collective imaginary of the consumers of its audivisual products via the design of the lettering? How does Disney lettering become

etched on the memory of the audience? (Postman, 2001). These are the questions which form the basis of and the approach to the research.

The discourse carried out by this multinational encompasses periods of time, public and communications media (Even-Zohar, 1990). The principle objective was to ascertain the significance of the lettering (typography, calligraphy or created script) in the Disney imaginary. A secondary objective was to analyse the quality of some of those images, both in terms of aspects of form as well as symbolism (Mirzoeff, 2006). We also considered the possibility of converting these findings into valid material for the training of education professionals and the wider public (Said-Valbuena, 2019), generating shared knowledge (Munari, 2019) to improve the education of values for citizens (Pacheco, Moura, Soares & Almeida, 2019), approaching the communications means as an ideological and cultural showcase (McLuhan, 1994).

3. Materials and methodology

For the present study the reference point used is "The Disney Classics", a collection of 60 animated feature films produced between 1937 and 2016. These movies are, for the most part, characterised by classic stories. Of this collection, a total of 12 were selected for analysis, based on 12 variables which characterise the producer. These examples are also representative of almost every decade during which productions have been distributed. One movie per decade was selected, with the exception of the examples from the 80s, 90s and 2000 respectively due to the large number of productions released during these latter periods. Consequently, the sample is representative of the diversity of productions created by Disney. Each film is representative of the variables constant in the producer's cinematographic style.

Película	Año	Productores	Directores	Productora	Variable	Lugar
Fantasía	1940	Disney, W.	Algar, J., Armstrong, S., Beebe, F., Ferguson, N., Handley, J., Hee, T., Jackson, W., Kuske, H. y Roberts, B.	Walt Disney Pictures y RKO Pictures	Cortometrajes	
Música, maestro	1946	Disney, W.	Clark, L., Geronimi, C., Larson, E. y Reitherman, W.	Walt Disney	Película musical	
La bella durmiente	1959	Disney, W.	Clark, L., Geronimi, C., Larson, E. y Reitherman, W.	Walt Disney Animarion Studios	Princesa de la 1ª era	
Los Aristogatos	1970	Hibler, W. y Reitherman, W.	Reitherman, W.	Walt Disney Pictures	Sin referente literario	
La bruja novata	1971	Walsh, B.	Stevenson, R.	The Walt Disney Company	Realidad-ficción	EE.UU.
Taron y el caldero mágico	1985	Hale, J.	Berman, T. y Rich, R.	Walt Disney Pictures	Con referente literario	
Los rescatadores en Canguro-landia	1990	Schumacher, T.	Butoy, H. y Gabriel, M.	Walt Disney Pictures	Animales	
Pocahontas	1995	Pentecost, J.	Gabriel, M. y Golsdberg, M.	Walt Disney Pictures	Mujer no princesa	
Mulan	1998	Coats, P.	Cook, B. y Bancroft, T.	Walt Disney Pictures y Walt Disney Feature Animation	LGTBIQ	
El planeta del Tesoro	2002	Clements, R., Conli, R. y Musker, J.	Clements, R. y Musker, J.	Walt Disney Pictures y Walt Disney Feature Animation	Película futurista	
Tiana y el sapo	2009	Del Vecho, P. y Lasseter, J.	Clements, R. y Musker, J.	Walt Disney Pictures	Princesa de la 2º era	
Forzen: el reino de hielo	2013	Del Vecho, P. y Lasseter, J.	Buck, C. y Lee, J.	Walt Disney Animarion Studios y Walt Disney Pictures	Princesa de la 3ª era	

Figure 1: *Materials categorized by decades and variables.*

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From the 1930s, the feature film *Fantasia* was selected, the first of the collection of feature films produced. From the 1940s, we selected *Make Mine Music!*, a movie characterised by the use of music as language to communicate and depict ideas. Representing the 1950s we chose *Sleeping Beauty*, the ultimate princess set against the backdrop of the first era (2nd wave of feminisim). This was chosen because it maintains the same characteristics of submissiveness as the first in the collection.

From the 1960s, *The Aristocats* is a feature film which does not have source material in literature, something which sets it apart from the other films in the collection, lacking a literary basis, as happens in musicals, futuristic movies or those which combine reality and fiction. From the 1970s, the film selected is *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*, a classic production combining real and animated images. It is the only example from the collection which invokes armed conflict (Second World War).

For the 1980s, we chose *The Black Cauldron*, a feature film with origins in literature whose genre is legend and fantasy, and *The Rescuers Down Under*, a movie about animals and a sequel to *The Rescuers*. The two productions from the 1990s are *Pocahontas* and *Mulan*. The former is a film whose protagonist does not belong to reality, which is significant for the sample, given than it is the first Disney production in which otherness is contemplated as victimhood and western society as aggressive. The latter can be expressed as an example of animation with an LGBTQ element given its inclusion of diverse gender identities.

Representing the first decade of the twenty first century, we selected *Treasure Planet*, a feature film about a future reality. From the same decade we chose *The Princess and the Frog*, a movie about princesses from the second era (3rd wave of feminisim) and which features the only protagonist of black heritage in the collection. We conclude the selection with *Frozen*, from the 2010-2020 decade, which represents the variable of princesses of the third era (4th feminist wave), offering visibility, through the character of Elsa, to the sexually diverse woman.

Having selected the twelve productions we proceeded to a scheme of study for the lettering used (Stake, 2005). Posters and banners used to publicise the films were analysed (in English and Spanish), evaluating the differences and similarities between both. Similarly a comparison is made with the title page or front cover of the movies, and between the English and Spanish. We concluded the research by considering the main titles and end titles of each film. This was carried out on the basis of an analysis of fixed and moving images, for which we referred to the Arts Based Research (Alonso-Sanz, 2013) as an example of research of artistic styles, configured on the basis of the so-called ABR Arts Based Research (Rolling, 2017).

4. The Visual Culture of Disney

The development of the visual aesthetic which defines Disney productions is underpinned by its continual adaptation to techniques which are state of the art for their time. In the exhibition *Disney, the Art of Telling Stories*, produced by CaixaForum, we were able to demonstrate, through original material, the development of the images, evaluating each type of material and process utilised, from pen to paper in the early drawings carried out by Walt Disney himself (1901-1966) to the computer design techniques of the latest productions.

From an early age Walt Disney had an interest in drawing. During the First World War, he was sent to Europe in a Red Cross Ambulance Unit. On his return to Kansas he began work creating publicity vignettes. In the 1920s he moved to Hollywood and founded a studio with his brother Roy. In 1928 he released *Steam Boat Willie*, comprising the first animated drawings where there were fully synchronised images and sound. In 1932 he incorporated colour into his animation with the short film *Flowers and Trees* and in 1937 he released *The Old Mill*, his first short film shot using the multiplane camera technique. In the same year he released *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, the first animated feature film. Since that time, Disney has kept up to date with the technology related to the projected image with its adoption of successive technological programmes.

There has been a constant flow of interactions between the aesthetics promoted by Disney and the productions of many local cultures which have been

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adapted to the tastes of the public and the prevailing trends (Albaladejo Ortega & Sánchez Martínez, 2019). The hybridisation promoted by the children's comic, publicity and popular culture provokes similar aesthetic creations. Among these hybridisations we can highlight the aesthetic of Lladró, an international decorative porcelain brand which boomed between the 1960s and 1990s, famed for a product which brings to mind the kitsch style of Disney (Ramon, 2012). Something similar occurs with the specific aesthetic of the Fallas de Valencia celebration, with ephemeral adornments which tend towards an hegemonic style which could be considered pretentious, but which are an historic reference point. Both cases show the capacity of Disney to penetrate the daily habits of people practically the world over, via an aesthetic which is acknowledged by most people, which adapts it to its usual routines from specific perspectives (Ramon, 2017). Thus we refer not to a fleeting trend but a permanent state of visual influence with effects on the everyday prevailing environment (Benjamin, 2003).

5. Letters in Disney posters

In the poster for *Fantasia* we find similies between the typology used for its English version, and that which the distributor Cifesa released in Spain initially. It is interesting given that no change was made in the translation, conserving in the Spanish dubbed version the original "*Fantasia*". The problem with translations into Spanish in North American productions is that the original meaning often tends to change. This process also affects the graphic style of the lettering, when despite conserving the word, the graphic art is "translated". We see here that Cifesa opted to use upper case letters, practically copying the original poster, where we also see highlighted the slogan "the triumph of colour and music with the Philadelphia Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Stokowski". The typographical design dominates, namely, the letters which follows the printing press tradition. There is alternation of upper and lower case with notable differences in terms of the composition of colours and registers used.

Figure 2: Posters of the film Fantasia *(Disney, 1940)*.

The film has been re-released several times and in each of these the lettering style has changed, including being changed into lower case with serifa font from the earlier upper case. A title which is only one word means it stands out, being placed centrally in the layout of the poster, adapted to the graphic style of each period in which it was distributed. In the film's re-releases the posters demonstrate new typographical models. There is also the technological evolution to be taken into account, with the adaptation of films to the latest innovations. An example of this is the emergence, at the end of the twentieth century, of DVD and digital copies. *Fantasia* was re-released at that time, incorporating a typography which restored the original capital letters, although much more stylised.

Figure 3: Posters of the film Make Mine Music! *(Disney, 1946)*.

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In the original poster, in English for *Make Mine Music!* we see the depiction of two child like figures dancing on a piano keyboard, surrounded by wind and percussion instruments. Again the music is the advertising factor, invoking great orchestras and directors. As *¡Musica Maestro!* For the Spanish version, in the poster of the RKO distributor the same scheme is maintained but transmutes into red in the central area, which in the English version is an intense blue. The typography is different, imitating the original maintaining upper and lower case, simulating the scholar-style calligraphy of the time. When it was re-released on DVD, the English version and the Spanish translation both retained the same colour scheme, composition and typography. Letters imitates the musical graphics and the instruments are retained, these seen dancing on the roof, incorporating a whale dressed as a Tyrolean prince (in reference to the principal character of the latest short film *The Whale who Wanted to Sing*). The curious dancing "clarinet" (which appears like a hornpipe) is a metaphorical homage to Benny Goodman, American clarinetist.
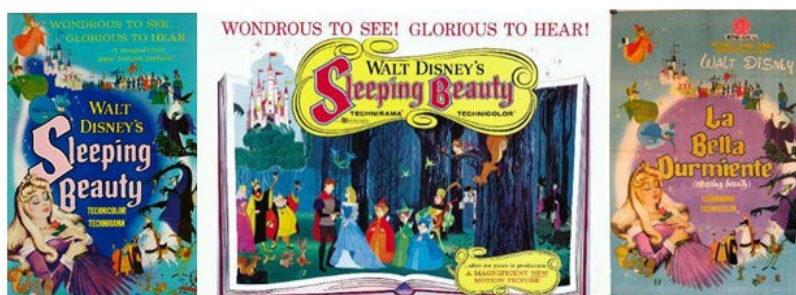

Figure 4: *Posters of the film* Sleeping Beauty *(Disney, 1959).*

With *Sleeping Beauty*, there is a phenonemon common also to other films and classics of children's literature, whereby the Middle Ages is used as a source of inspiration. When these are adapted by Disney, the type of lettering used is similar to the calligraphy of medieval manuscripts, referenced by the roman rounded uncial font, the carolingian lower case, gothic or humanist lower case. In the poster for *Sleeping Beauty* we find a hybrid of all these in the lettering, though a free interpretation of gothic lettering is the dominant style. The colour palette is pink, in compliance with the supposed preferences of little girls from the perspective of the patriarchy.

Figure 5: Posters of the film The Aristocats *(Hibler & Reitherman, 1970).*

The Aristocats poster transports us to a time of effervescence and high spirits, namely the *op art* and *pop art* genres. Black geometric upper case letters with circles and angles emerge from a white background in which different characters from the film abound. It is a musical film, a jazz tribute, with a love story between cats. There is another piano (this time a pink upright) and various wind, string and percussion instruments accompanying the cast of cats. The title is similar, only the letter G changes (a C in the original English), so in the translated version it was very easy to connect the series of letters in the title. It might be one of the best posters of those we analysed, very much in accordance with a moment in time which concluded a decade full of revolts and uprisings, highlighted by the civil unrest in France in May 1968.

Figure 6: Posters of the film Bedknobs and Broomsticks *(Walsh, 1971).*

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The original English version of the poster for *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* is very characteristic of the 1970s revival of deco lettering and films set against a background of the so-called "roaring twenties". The white background contrasts with black and pink letters (*Broadway*) with paloseco font combining upper and lower case. Characters are markedly geometric and easy to read and the background is completely clear. In the English version of the poster there is a blue background and the letters comprise an illuminated announcement, black with yellow dots inside, in a light bulb type shape. The aesthetic is completely different from the previous one. We find similar lettering in the version of the Filmayer distributor, although in this case they are yellow, upper case letters, topped with black graphics and orange dots inside. The drawing which accompanies these letters is framed in an illustrative style which was very common between the 60's and 70's. Another later example also from Filmayer (a re-release of the film in a period of football world cup finals "the most entertaining football world cup finals of the century"). There is upper and lower case lettering, in blue with yellow edges, similar to the lettering style we would use to draw headings in school work.

Figure 7: Posters of the film The Black Cauldron *(Hale, 1985).*

In *The Black Cauldron* we return to medieval references, as reflected in the letters of the title. However, there is great variety of styles presented in both the English and Spanish using Celtic style upper case lettering, especially the B in the word 'Black' in the original poster, but which in the Spanish version uses unattractive, insipid fonts, both in the original poster as well as the DVD cover which was released on the 25th anniversary of the movie's release. Here we found a certain similarity to the aesthetic predominating in the covers of children's books of the long epic syle.

Figure 8: *Posters of the film* The Rescuers Down Under *(Shumacher, 1990).*

In *The Rescuers Down Under* there is a great variety of styles. The 1990s began with a multitude of issues (postmodernism and the first Gulf War being two predominant topics of debate) and the typography used contextualises this backdrop. In the first poster, the original English version, there is white lettering, comprising loose strokes (similar to the lettering on promotional boxes in shops). In the work of the designer Tom Whalen for the *Mondo* Project, the sixties aesthetic is revived. Here we see a great illustrative work, dominated by contrasts of colour, offering a very considered product for a wide audience of online distribution.

Figure 9: *Posters of the film* Pocahontas *(Pentecost, 1995).*

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Letters from the movie *Pocahontas* remains in the memory of many of us (Alegría, Acevedo & Rojas, 2018), as does that for *Mulan* and *Frozen*. It is no coincidence that this lettering achieves its aim. When a film title is limited to a single word and that word is the name of the protagonist, it is very easy to package the visual message. What these three movies have in common is that they feature female heroines who carry out memorable feats. The title comprises one word, in capital letters, whose compositional argument is marked by reference to a type of script invoking the natural world - a carved inscription of a name on a tree trunk. In these examples, the position of the title is the same, in the lower part of the poster, occupying the entire space at the base. Comprising 10 letters, there are 4 very resonant syllables. The double cacophony of the ”O” plus double “A” also helps towards easy memorising. The central “H” balances the series.

Figure 10: Posters of the film Mulan *(Coats, 1998).*

Again in the case of *Mulan* we observe an evident parallel between the English and Spanish versions. The title is retained, as is the typography used (*Mulan* font) a hybrid which strategically combines upper and lower case letters. The objective is to achieve a universal image of the production. The five letters address the humanistic aspects of the renaissance but at the same time with reference to traces of the eastern origins of the myth, something which is projected in the “u” as a small letter,

with the left extended foot of the "a" and the "l" which is joined to the "a". The balance is also evident in the composition of the poster, where the edge of a sword held high divides the image in half. A very oriental and strong solution.

Figure 11: Posters of the film Treasure Planet *(Clements, Conli & Musker, 2002).*

Treasure Planet is a revival of a classic Robert Stevenson story, but using a space age re-interpretation. In the poster we see a mix of elements of pirate adventure and space travel. However, the lettering is designed using uncial calligraphy, closer to manual carolingian lettering than an imaginary future world. The Spanish version respects the original typography. A horizontal line highlights the central element in both versions.

Figure 12: Posters of The Princess and the Frog *(Del Vecho & Lasseter, 2009).*

In *The Princess and the Frog*, again the stylistic criteria are unified globally, but here there is no literal translation of the title - "the princess" having been changed to "Tiana". The graphics for the "o" from the word "sapo" are reproduced for the "o" in the word "frog" and in both languages the green of the upper case letters is maintained.

Figure 13: *Posters of the film* Frozen *(Del Vecho & Lasseter, 2013)*.

The last selected title is a hugely successful production, imprinting itself on our imagination with a song and clear lettering. Again it is a musical and features a young heroine, who is also a Queen. We are unable to understand the changes of the title in Spanish, which introduces a fairly unnecessary subtitle ("King of the Ice"). However, the upper case of the name is retained as well as the creative design. The letter "o" appears as a quintessential creative element, as in many Disney titles.

6. Main Titles and End Titles in Disney Films

In the same way that the poster has become a reflection of Disney productions, the painstaking work which is carried out on the credits also merits special attention (Gamonal, 2011). During the first four decades there were no end titles in Disney productions, all the information contained in these appearing prior to the film.

It should also be pointed out that that the information shared is restricted to production, direction, cast, animation and music and does not include others in the crew.

In the first four feature films we analysed, the designers of the starting titles and end credits remained anonymous. A characteristic which *Fantasia*, *Make Mine Music!*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Aristocats* have in common is that they all play the main title sequence, accompanied by the musical reproduction from key parts of the film. *Fantasia* and *Make Mine Music!*, also utilise musical elements, such as silhouettes of orchestra members in the first and piano keys in the second. In *Sleeping Beauty* medieval adornments accompany the letters. With *The Aristocats*, for the first time in main titles characters from the feature film itself are used, in this case, the cats. In presenting the film title at the start the English Language *Aristocats* is used and following a sequence where Berlioz, one of the smallest cats stretches the word, the letter "c" changes to a "g" and the letter "o" from the Spanish version is added, resulting in *Aristogatos*. This introduces the audience to the central theme from the beginning of the film. In the last two examples the word "Technicolor" is present below the film title, calling attention to the technical process of colour animation.

Figure 14: *Main titles:* Fantasia *(Disney, 1940),* Make Mine Music! *(Disney, 1946),* Sleepy Beauty *(Disney, 1959) and* The Aristocats *(Hibler & Reitherman, 1970).*

In the 1980s more information began to appear about the professionals involved in the film production process. Credits acknowledge the participation of David Jonas in the Design Titles of *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* and *The Black Cauldron*, in the latter together with Ed Garbet. These two examples incorporate the use of a Medieval-style backdrop and other touches. In *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*, all the information is presented again in the closing titles following the film's final scene. However,

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in *The Black Cauldron* the title of the film is presented in the main titles and all the information about professionals and companies involved in the production of the film appears in the end credits, a scheme which is also used in the remainder of the films.

Figure 15: *Main titles of* Bedknobs and broomsticks *(Walsh, 1971) and* The black cauldron *(Hale, 1985).*
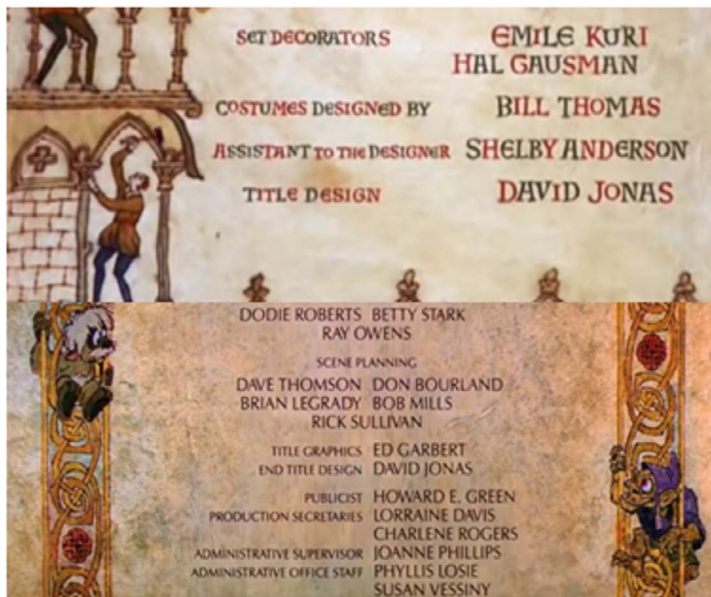

Figure 16: *End titles of* Bedknobs and broomsticks *(Walsh, 1971) and* The black cauldron *(Hale, 1985).*

The remaining examples maintain the same pattern of including only the film title in main titles and displaying all the other production-related information at the end, including the design of titles. However there are slight but significant differences. While in the majority, the film title is presented from the start, in *Pocahontas* and *The Princess and the Frog*, it appears following the first introductory scene which lasts a few minutes. This format works by arousing interest, in particular it is used in feature films involving characters from alternative cultures, such as African Americans and other indigenous populations. All these titles coincide with those presented in the posters and billboards for the films previously evaluated, with the exception of *The Rescuers Down Under*. The colours in *Pocahontas* are also darker and have a more dual tone.

Figure 17: *Main Titles:* The Rescuers Down Under *(Schumacher, 1990),* Pocahontas *(Pentecost, 1995),* Mulan *(Coats, 1998),* The Treasure Planet *(Clements, Conli & Musker, 2002),* The Princess and the Frog *(Del Vecho & Lasseter, 2009) and* Frozen *(Del Vecho & Lasseter, 2013).*

In these six films the credits are presented uniformly, with a series of white lettering on a black background, with all the information relating to the film production. There is a lack of other images accompanying the melody which is reproduced and the listings which are presented in *The Rescuers Down Under*. However, in the other examples, there are drawings which characterise each story. In *Pocahontas* the information is accompanied by spears, in *Mulan* by Chinese calligraphy, in *Treasure Planet*, the colour yellow is used to highlight the headers, in *the Princess and the Frog* the colour green dominates, matching the colour of the amphib-

ian, while *Frozen* uses shields similar to those which appear in the castle of Elsa and Anna. These elements introduce into the audience's subconscious the characteristic Disney aesthetic.

Figure 18: End titles *of* The rescuers down under, *(Schumacher, 1990),* Pocahontas *(Pentecost, 1995),* Mulan *(Coats, 1998),* The Treasure Planet *(Clements, Conli & Musker, 2002),* The Princess and the Frog *(Del Vecho & Lasseter, 2009) and* Frozen *(Del Vecho & Lasseter, 2013).*

What stands out from this evaluation of feature films throughout these decades is that both individuals and companies have been commissioned for the design of titles. Some individuals who have contributed are as follows: Dan Perri in *The Rescuers Down Under*; Susan Bradley in *Pocahontas* and *Mulan*, Brian King in *Treasure Planet* and Mary Hoggen for *The Princess and the Frog*. The companies involved include Buena Vista Imaging for *Mulan* and *Treasure Planet* and Scarlet Letters for *Frozen*. This diverse list of contributors involved in the design of main titles and credits demonstrates how carefully this aspect of the production process has been approached throughout the latest Disney era under analysis.

7. The preoccupation with design: from Disney to Almodovar

The film posters (like the trailers) are circulated well in advance of release and this is the means by which the film is represented right at the start of promotion. It is something which etches itself in the memory of cinema goers, together with the title's letters (Gamonal, 2005). The great film directors have always recruited good designers to create these all important graphics, even if those individuals don't have significant professional recognition. "Despite the fact that we live in a culture where visual images predominate, or perhaps because of that, the general public do not focus in on cinema posters. They look at them without considering the creators or the design process or context behind their production" (Pedraza, 1991, p. 86).

The test for how well these highly produced designs work (Sennett, 2013) is how successfully they transport us to the setting of the film, as occurs with the posters and typography used in the movies of Alfred Hitchcock, Stanley Kubrick, Steven Spielberg, Woody Allen, Agnès Varda, Céline Sciamma, Icíar Bollain and Quentin Tarantino. Choosing a good typographical design and poster for a film is a team project requiring numerous decisions by each specialist. Disney has always used high ranking professionals who until recent decades retained their anonymity, individuals such as David Jonas, Dan Perri, Susan Bradley, Brian King, Mary Hogg as well as the production company Scarlet Letters.

The highly renowned director Pedro Almodovar has always been adept at recruiting competent designers for his posters and in his latest productions he has been supported by creatives such as Oscar Marine, Xavier Mariscal and Juan Gatti (Carlos Berlanga and Ceesepe have been involved at other times). Also notable is his collaboration with Ivan Zuleta in his early films. This promotional material can help us in diversity education (Alfeo Álvarez, González de Garay & Rosado Millán, 2011). Zulueta was also a film director and thus highly knowledgeable about the inner workings of this culture. He ascribed much importance to the promotional posters and used great technical mastery, both in the lettering - sometimes using

design described as a colliding style of lettering- and in the figurative content of the poster, incorporating references to old children's comics and sticker albums (Pedraza, 1991). The posters he created for Almodovar have become an essential reference point (*Labyrinth of Passions*, *Dark Habits*, *What have I done to deserve this?*). This helps us understand the extent to which Disney or Almodovar tend towards graphic and iconic connections in their posters, given that the world of the Spanish cinema goer "terrible but not that terrible, melodramatic comedy, plastic and passionate" (…) "very rich, visually, comically monstrous, terrible, frivolous, loud", might be closer to the Disney machinery than other references that are often used (Buñuel, Fellini, Fassbinder).

8. Conclusions

The Disney imaginary is built around a combination of all the visual and auditory elements of the each film, understanding also the tangential aspects such as the posters and billboards used in promotion, as well as the design of lettering and credits. The type of lettering used for credits has evolved through the decades as observed in the series of films analysed, being adapted to the period of time when the production was released, something which perpetuates in subsequent re-releases. From the initial short nature of these, they have developed to reach a specification of all those individuals who participate in the development of the feature film and its paralanguage. Designers are not used arbitrarily, rather they are selected based on the theme of each film.

In accordance with the proposals in our research objectives, we have reviewed the aspects of form and content of visual culture which identifies the Disney imaginary, analysing the lettering in the design of posters and credits, confirming the capacity for adapting, something which influences the creation of a very powerful visual mythology.

On exploring the educational possibilities of the study, we confirm the value of incorporating these questions in the training of teaching professionals, converting these elements into valid material to use appropriately in education. Given that forms of media are a powerful cultural showcase, the lettering becomes a valuable

image and it is appropriate to ascertain its graphic and educational value, beyond its use as a mere verbal tool.

Disney productions have been studied from a variety of different perspectives, but there are few research works which involve the use of letters from a visual culture point of view. Justin Callaghan designed the *Waltograph* font set against the Walt Disney logo, and artists from all the eras have put their aesthetic stamp on productions. We opted to carry out a diachronic analysis of development of lettering of Disney productions based on forms of letters used in the movie names, the poster, the main titles and end credits. In this way we aimed to achieve a greater appreciation of the importance of lettering in the imaginary of one of the biggest communication conglomerates in the world. By studying the lettering in the promotional posters and credits of Disney, its characteristics and the way it has worked at various points in its history, we can better understand the mechanics of its production, giving rise to new study possibilities which will enable the burning issues in the creative, technological, communications and educational fields to be improved. If Disney lettering perpetuates a patriarchal hegemony, like that in its movies, this knowledge enables us to carry out a critical discourse which has ramifications for understanding that reality.

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