


APRENDICES 4 - TRADUCCIÓN AL INGLÉS

Walter Tournier

 Walter Tournier | Aprendices | La Red | 2024

INTRO

It was difficult for me to get toys that I liked, they were not common. So I made them myself.

With common elements children can express things, which is what matters. I think in some way it is a form of dialogue.

You see that the potential that teamwork gives you in different areas is very good and enriches everything.

PREVIA

Maybe it's my fantasy about the processes, but I sometimes think that working in the creation of worlds allows you to inhabit another place as well.

More than inhabiting, I believe it is building.

That's the interesting thing, when you build everything. From the environment, the place, to the personality of each of the dolls. That's what's interesting.

The best thing happens afterwards, when someone finishes a take or whatever, presses play and sees the animation, sees it coming to life. That is the most important, most impactful thing for the animator.

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Close it a little. Good.

You're going to change my face if you keep this up.

No, no, no, no.

It's another face.

We're ready.

Alright.

Thank you so much.

I have some crazy ideas, things that occur to me and I go and do them.

For example, I loved steam engines.

I tried to get one, but I couldn't buy them.

The old ones, you know? Those machines that... And in the end I made one.

Did you make a miniature version?

I made a steam engine that actually worked and everything, with a whole system.

I got a blueprint, so I would put water in it, I'd put the lighter below, I'd give it the old pah, pah, pah, and it started to work.

I am a teacher, my work is in the classroom. I am a Biology teacher, but also... many interests, just like you.

Teacher...

Biology, yes. And frustrated architect.

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Oh, yeah.

Very frustrated. Come here, it's already yours. There you go.

Apprentices, season 4, Walter, take 1. Second clap.

ENTREVISTA

How do I define myself? What do I know how I define myself? First, as a restless person, I'm always doing things.

On the other hand, I don't know how to define myself. As someone who has certain interests, a desire to know; and at the same time to know and transmit things.

I don't know. I define myself as a somewhat creative guy. I'm not great at it, but I am always trying to create things, do things. I also define myself as a craftsman.

I never thought about how to define myself. But something like that.

More than anything, I'm restless and worried as well. I feel like a guy who is concerned about human beings, about what is happening out there.

And with respect to children, I don't pretend to be an educator, I don't want to be, I'm not interested. I want to suggest different visions and things so that children can think and develop.

But yes, I am someone who seeks to motivate people in some way, especially children.

And I hope it is for the benefit of a man, man or woman, whatever you want to call it, a better human being. That's what motivates me, you know?

Did this restlessness begin at home? How did your hands become restless about the world?

Yes, I believe I am always moving my hands, permanently. These hands have helped me through life and have also given me sustenance.

The house was very special, located in the Pocitos area, an old house with two slopes and a garden. A garden... not a garden but a piece of land where crops were grown, which led to various things being done in the house, for example, pigs were brought in, tomato pulp was made.

Wine was also made there. We had basements with sinks and everything, and I participated in all those kinds of family things.

Well, as for the work with my hands and all that...

On the one hand, the pianos, or pianolas that existed at that time, and that were transformed into pianos, when you took away the system that made it work, and those large devices the size of a piano, brutish things... Full of different things, pipes and washers and bellows. My old man brought them home, and I loved to assemble and disassemble and make things.

My old man worked, my mother was a housewife. We lived with my grandfather and my great uncle. We were not money people at all. So it was difficult for me to get some toys that I liked, they were not common.

So what did I do? I made them myself. For example, I liked little airplanes. So I grabbed the piece of wood, got to work and made an airplane.

And many things of the sort. I manufactured bows and arrows because we couldn't buy them, you know?

And my father taught me some things, especially carpentry. He was a piano technician along with my uncle, they fixed pianos and tuned them and all that.

He taught me his knowledge, and so I dedicated myself to a lot of manual work, you know? And I developed it over the years, on different things.

I imagine that house, that uneven house with many spaces. A full house, with a large family.

You have something of the alchemist, of transforming things. Pianolas into pianos, grapes into wine, machinery into toys and little airplanes.

How much of that influenced you to create other things as well?

I played with all those things and I built things to be able to play. And yes, that made me develop a certain dexterity, and later, when I grew up and entered college, I dedicated myself to architecture. Unsurprisingly, I loved working with miniatures.

For example, when I was 18 or 20 years old, I had a craft workshop where we worked a lot of metal. And I had the possibility of doing a welding course at the Faculty of Engineering, which was two blocks away.

And that helped me, it expanded in some way the possibilities that I could have at a craft level. So I started to use it for artistic purposes.

I managed to develop all the handmade knowledge that helps me to this day. When we make a film with dolls, for example, all the dolls have a metal structure that is made entirely by us. So, that opened up a possibility for me that few people in the Americas have, the knowledge of how to make and develop the structure of a doll, for example.

But all that is the product of an evolution. It's like an evolution.

An accumulation of experiences with the materials.

That's how I see it today, but at the time you did it out of necessity or out of interest and you just went for it.

Yes, all that craft knowledge makes you reach a point where you say: "I want to do this, I will do this". And the sky's the limit, you know?

But it's all handmade, you know? 3D did not exist back then, nor lasers nor anything like that. It was all handmade.

You had to leave the country by force. Years of exile where you lost contact with the materials and environment you were used to. What happened in those years of exile where you lost your working environment?

Yes, there came a point when we had to leave and the first stop was Argentina. But things also got complicated in Argentina, it was the worst time, so I went to Lima where my ex-partner was located, who had a craft workshop near the Faculty of Engineering.

I mean, I went to a place where a workshop was already set up, so I joined it. But my interest in cinema was still latent, so I managed to get funding for my first short film thanks to a Peruvian law that protected national production. A percentage of the cinema revenue went to the filmmakers.

What happened? I had already made a film here, "In the Jungle There Is Much to Do", with cut paper made in Uruguay. So I went there and continued. I made a first film with the same cut-out characters, I put them in different shots, I set up the camera and made improvements, but always working with paper and needles.

That led to the second and third movies. I didn't like the technique very much so I got more into plasticine, which is when I returned to volume again and that was where...

Look, doing animation at that time, when Walt Disney was still going strong, getting the materials to do that kind of thing was impossible. They couldn't be obtained. So that led me to think: "No, this technique doesn't work". So I turned to plasticine. So, of course, I made my first plasticine film, which was "Our Little Paradise", with one character and a TV set.

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And I realized that I could work better with elements that were at my disposal, that I already had. I made a structure with iron and little things, and plasticine. After that, cardboard and wood to make the things.

So I started doing animation using the elements I had at my disposal.

That was a summary of the evolution of how I got to do my later work, which was more comprehensive.

Walter, I also come from the educational system, which is where I develop as a teacher.

I think back to that child, very creative, very transformative and with a need for movement, a need to use his hands. What were you like at school? Did you suffer school or not so much?

In the educational system we tend to spend a lot of time still, sitting down. How was that experience for you?

You know, I have few memories of school. First, I didn't go to public school. I went to a religious school. And I remember anecdotes, nothing more. But they're not important or anything like that.

And I think that regarding what we were talking about, the question of manual creation, the school had very little influence on me, very little. School didn't motivate me, it didn't motivate me at all.

The other day I was reading about Plan Ceibal. I thought it was wonderful: the teachers go outside and teach mathematics in the middle of the country.

In other words, the connection between human beings, nature and learning is staggering, it is where you learn the most and develop your brain the most.

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I think that animation, for example, is very good for children, and every time we have done a little workshop or gone to a school or something, and we work with children or young people, they get really excited... Because it gives them the chance to work with everyday things, scissors, pencils, cardboards and more. You are creating things. And if you do it as a team instead of individually, it's even better. Using common elements, children can achieve and express things, which is what matters, expressiveness.

I think that expressing something is a form of dialogue. A kind of silent dialogue. Someone tells you one thing, shows something to you, someone else shows you another thing. It's viable and inexpensive. I don't know why it isn't developed further across all educational levels.

I was about to ask you that. What did you find in schools where you worked with children?

What did you see and what could you recommend to us teachers?

Technology today is accessible to the majority of people, it is very easy, you can make animations with your cell phone. Children and young people access it very quickly. So, when you suddenly give them some guidelines on how to do or how to move certain things, that empowers them.

Animating something that is still and for it to come to life, that is very good for children, and I think we should develop this tool more.

I see that this technique really interests you and it takes a lot of dedication and expertise. But you also worry about the content, you have something to say.

As I always say, it is one thing to move something and another to animate. Anyone can move something, but not anyone can make it come to life, with its silences.

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That is to animate, to give soul, soul to the object, or whatever it is. Even a can of soda can have soul. A can may come here, stop, look at the abyss, get scared. And it's just tin. You can give soul to a can, for example.

So, first you have to learn the technique, then once you acquire the technique, you move on to the next stage, what to say and how to say it. Technique will show you how to say it, but not what to say.

So, the idea must be linked to the technique in order to deliver a certain result. If you don't know the technique, you won't be able to get your message across in the best way. It is essential to know the technique.

In the development of the content that you created with techniques like stop motion and others, there is a huge team involved.

How did you learn to work with such diverse teams? You have to write a script, you have to shoot the material, you have to edit it.

I started doing things individually.

I mean, as for the plasticine movie we talked about, I made it practically alone, the doll, the whole thing, and I animated it. But there comes a point when you have to start working with people.

I don't know anything about sound; of effects, even less; of music, I really have no idea. So you start working with other people and they start to give you new elements. That is how I learned that when you work with others, they enrich your idea, it is essential to work with a team.

Maybe you make your first film alone or with one other person, but your next film should involve more people. Because you want things to get better, in a way.

If I do everything myself, I'll probably make mistakes, but if I work together with more people to make the dolls, those dolls will turn out better than if I

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did them by myself. Of that I am very sure. The same goes for the set design.

So, you start working with other people and when you get to making the feature film that we made, you see that the potential that teamwork gives you in different areas is very good and enriches everything. It enriches it, makes it better.

Everything works that way. It is the product of the things I learned throughout my career. That type of thing is very enriching. Teamwork for me is essential to making a film or any endeavor.