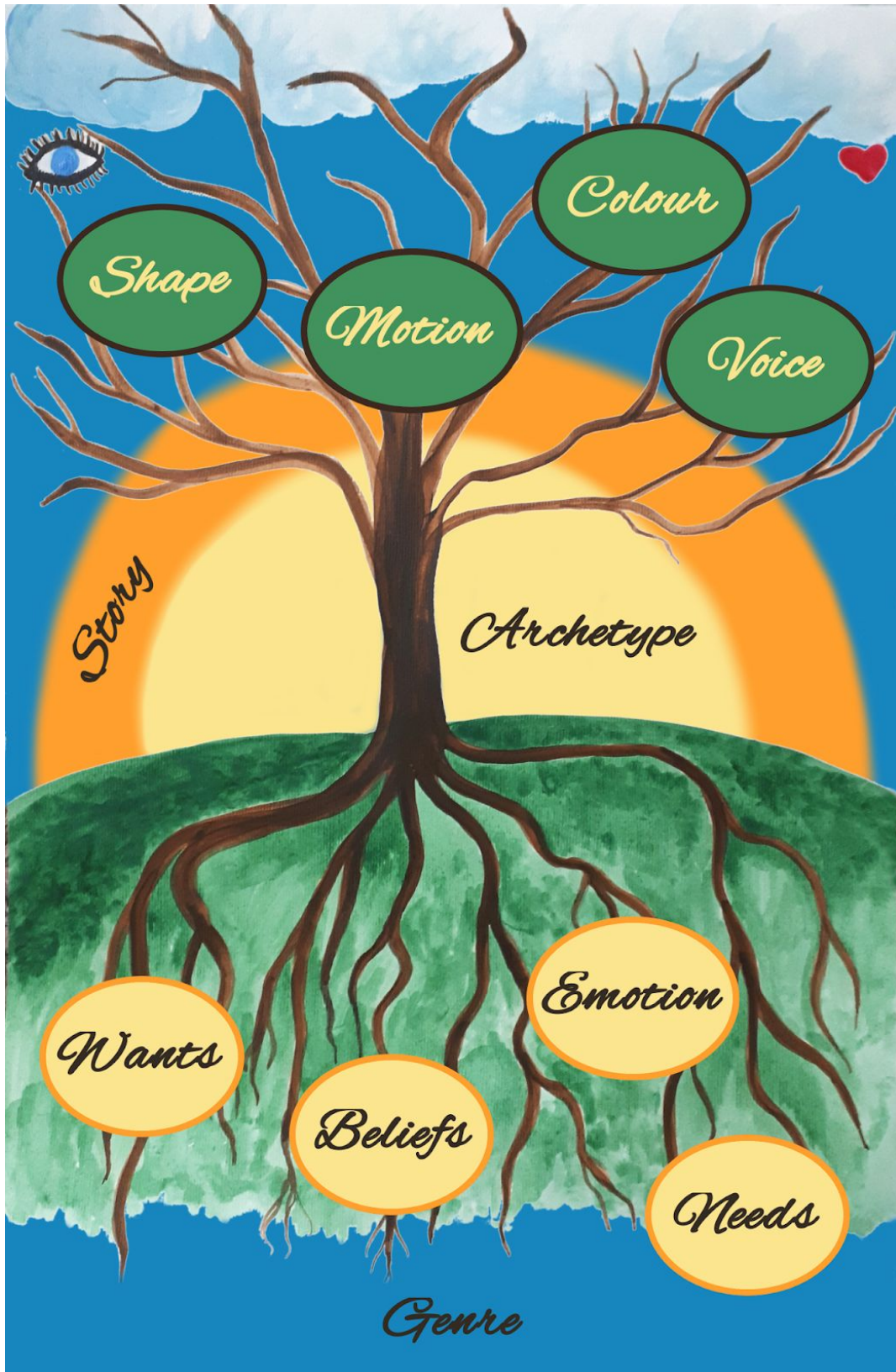# Creating Characters for Animation

(Sample from online course by Anamaria Ciucanu)

Animation as a Composite Topic

Linked Topic and Subtopics	Elements for Creating Animations
Psychology (P)	❖ Divergent/Lateral Thinking ❖ Convergent/Vertical Thinking ❖ Personality ❖ Temperament ❖ Emotion
Writing (W) ❖ Novels ❖ Short Stories ❖ Flash Fiction ❖ Poetry	❖ **(P)** ❖ Character Arcs ❖ Archetypes ❖ Story Arcs ❖ Relationships ❖ Symbolism
Theatre (T) ❖ Improv ❖ Method Acting & Co. ❖ Commedia dell'Arte ❖ Physical Theatre ❖ Puppeteering	❖ **(W)** ❖ Acting and Reacting ❖ Physicality and miming ❖ Mask work ❖ Timing and Editing ❖ Lighting ❖ Music
Film (F) ❖ Feature Film ❖ Short Film ❖ TV Series	❖ **(T)** ❖ Composition ❖ Photography ❖ Soundtrack
Arts and Crafts (AC) ❖ Concept Art ❖ Puppeteering ❖ Stop Motion	❖ Drawing ❖ Painting ❖ Sculpting ❖ Puppet Making ❖ Environment Making

	❖ Photography
Computer Graphics (CGr)	❖ Modelling ❖ Digital Sculpting ❖ UV Mapping ❖ Texturing ❖ Rigging ❖ Animating ❖ Lighting ❖ Rendering ❖ Compositing
Computer Science (CSc)	❖ Scripting ❖ Coding plug-ins

Engineering (Eng)
   ❖ Mechanics
   ❖ Optics
   ❖ Electronics
	❖ Automatons
	❖ Animatronics
	❖ Robots
	❖ Virtual Beings

Topics Explored for Character Creation

Writing

Method	Explanation
Archetypes (Vogler 2007)	**Hero** → 'A hero is someone willing to sacrifice his own needs on behalf of others.' (Vogler 2007) **Mentor** → Someone who aids, teaches, protects or guides the hero. **Threshold Guardian** → Challenges the hero when he/she reaches a threshold along the way. **Herald** → Announces challenges or the need for change in the hero's life. **Shapeshifter** → Brings doubt and danger to the story by changing between a friend and foe. **Shadow** → Represent the dark side of characters and usually aim to defeat the hero. **Ally** → The hero's companion and friend who aids them both on their quest and in their humanization. **Trickster** → Represents the comical, mischievous energy which often downplays the hero's ego.

Theatre

Method	Explanation
Commedia dell'Arte Archetypes (Rudlin 1994)	**Masters** → Want money ❖ Magnifico ❖ Pantalone ❖ Doctor **Servants** → Want food ❖ Zanni ❖ Brighela ❖ Arlequino **Lovers** → Want love ❖ 1st Actor ❖ 2nd Actor ❖ The Captain
Improv (Johnstone 1999) (Johnstone 1989)	**Who, what, where?** → Relational improv ❖ Who are we and what is our relationship? ❖ What are we doing? ❖ Where are we? **Status** ❖ **Low status** ➢ Doesn't make eye contact ➢ Touches their own face, clothes ➢ Keeps a large space from others ➢ Takes up little space ➢ Crouching physicality ➢ Frenetic in his actions and words ❖ **High status** ➢ Makes intense eye contact ➢ Touches other people's face, shoulder… ➢ Touches their own clothes ostentatiously ➢ Invades personal space ➢ Takes up a lot of space

	➢ Straight back and spread out physicality
	➢ Calm and calculated movements
	
	Endowments (on self/others)
	❖ **External State**
	 ➢ Adjective + noun (eg. happy feet)
	 ➢ Clothes worn
	 ➢ Animal/object characteristic
	 ➢ Profession
	 ➢ Quirks
	   ■ Nervous ticks
	 ➢ Physicality
	   ■ Change face shape
	   ■ Lead with parts of the body
	   ■ Change spine curvature
	   ■ Change leg/arm bend
	 ➢ Voice
	   ■ Accent
	   ■ Tone of voice
	   ■ Speaking style
	
	❖ **Internal State**
	 ➢ Emotion
	 ➢ Attitude
	 ➢ Belief
	 ➢ Want
	 ➢ Need

References

- ❖ Vogler, Christopher. 2007. *The Writer's Journey, Mythic Structure for Writers - Third Edition*. Published by Michael Wiese Productions.
- ❖ Rudlin, John. 1994. *Commedia dell'Arte, An Actor's Handbook.* Published by Routlegde.
- ❖ Johnstone, Keith. 1999. *Impro for Storytellers, Theatresports and the Art of Making Things Happen.* Published by Faber and Faber Limited.
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