

# Patrick McHale's Over the Garden Wall

## Brief history of Patrick McHale:

- Family background
  1. American animation, screenwriter, songwriter and independent filmmaker
  2. Born in New Jersey, United States on November 17, 1983
- Education and previous work
  1. McHale graduated from California institute of Arts.
  2. In 2004 he made an animation called Body where a man turned into a monster and got burned alive.
- Jobs at Cartoon Network
  1. Started working for CN in 2007 where he worked as a writer and storyboard artist of The Marvelous Misadventures of Flapjack and moved to work for Adventure Time up until its' season 5.

## I. CN's Over The Garden Wall Style Historical (Production context):

- Cartoon Network for halloween season (released in November)
- When was the idea pitch and what was happening during those times?  
2006 but didn't develop it.
- When was it commenced and what was happening during those times?  
2004 (the best time of cn animation)
- Target audience?  
6 - 12
- It was based on McHale's animated short "Tome of the Unknown" (24 October 2013)
- Two half-brothers, Wirt and Greg, journeyed into the unknown and needed to find their way out before the Beast find them
- Type of animation?  
2D paperless animation
- Background design style?  
Go check inspiration folder (1890s McLoughlin Brothers board game Game of Frog Pond,<sup>(16)</sup> illustrations by Gustave Doré for Cervantes's Don Quixote,<sup>(17)</sup> old illustrations for the Hans Christian Andersen story "The Tinderbox",<sup>(18)</sup> the Cheshire Cat illustration by John Tenniel from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,<sup>(19)</sup> and the "Dogville Comedies" short films)

Dante's inferno: A journey about the poet himself travelling through hell.

- Dante found himself in the forest -> **the opening of the series show Wirt questioning how the brothers end up in the forest**

- Each episode reflect/reference Dante's 9 circle of hell but the most interesting reference include
- First circle; Limbo -> "unbaptized and virtuous pagans" -> In inferno's people in the limbo wait for the salvation by Christ -> S1 EP 2 people in pottsfeld are actually skeletons dressed in Pumpkins and they were all waiting for the 'harvest' which is a reference to Jesus' salvation in Christian text (Trey, 2015) -> "...aren't you a little too early? I mean it doesn't seem like you're ready to join us just yet" -> Wirt isn't dead nor alive. It suggests that he's in the in-between but he will eventually join them someday (Since death is inevitable)
- Suicide forest in the seventh circle -> people turn into trees where Harpies feed on them -> People who are lost (give up hope) turn into the trees where the Beast feed on them through the tree oil made by the woodsmen - "You've been grinding up lost souls for years" S1 EP 10 3:23 - 3:25
- In Inferno, Lucifer sits in the middle of Ninth circle; Fraud. He was banished to hell because he wanted to usurp God and appear to taunt Dante to discourage him from his journey -> In Over the garden wall's Beast shared the trait where he tried manipulated and lied to all the main characters to get what he wants. He also performed a song to lure in those who are "lost" "Come wayward souls, who wander through the darkness, there is a light for the lost and the meek. Sorrow and fear, are easily forgotten, when you submit to the soil of the earth" - From the lyrics we can see how Beast is manipulating his victims by tricking them to think that Death is the answer to their sufferings.

### Character design:

- Shapes
- Cite people:
- Colour theory
  - What they suggest about Wirt, Greg and Beast

"Style is a convenient catchall term for the amalgamation of technique, tone, genre, influence, and inspiration"

"...Children's comics in particular tend to favour highly abstract designs that evoke an immediate emotional response"

“...people need identification figures – characters they can relate to, in whole they can see some aspect of themselves”

<p><b>Wirt</b></p> <p><u>Shape:</u></p> <p>Triangle for hat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stand out the most and gives audience an uneasy feelings while also reflect how dirt is also disturb by his surrounding.</li> </ul> <p>Circular face:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make the character appear friendly and approachable compared to Sumo from Clarence.</li> </ul> <p>Triangle cape:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unpredictable since we don't know what's he's hiding inside the cape (mysterious and make the audience want to know more about him)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Red</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (Motifs) Helps the audience shift their attention to Wirt who is the main protagonist</li> <li>- Red signifies (danger) which could suggest Wire's constant worried that the Beast is going to find them</li> <li>- It may be used to confused the audience since red is known for (bravery and adventurous) while Wirt is awkward, melodramatic and has a low self-esteem.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Purple</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (Sadness) Wirt can always be seen complaining about his existence and how things will never get better. His pessimism makes a good contrast with Greg.</li> <li>- (Mysterious) Indicate Wirt's hidden secrets just like how he's interested in poetry and interior design</li> <li>- (Frustration) Wirt can always be seen being frustrated with Greg and he's the only one reacting to the surrounding (being an audience surrogate) while Greg tends to annoy him all the time</li> <li>- (Wisdom) Wirt surprisingly figured the secret of the Beast and was able to take Greg home despite being a coward and insecure in the beginning. He gained self-esteem at the end and learnt to be a good brother.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gregory</b></p> <p><u>Shape:</u></p> <p>All the way round: Which suggest Greg's liveliness and how harmless he is (A child). He is an embodiment of youth.</p>	<p><b>Grey</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (Moody and depressing) In contrast to Greg who is really optimistic and almost air-headed. Greg is also really cheerful and he wasn't scared when he was being turn into an Eldelwood tree (Basically dying).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Green</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (Down the earth/growth) Greg is a young child estimated to be 5-7 YO. He finds happiness in cheering people up and make friends easily with everyone he encounters despite how unsettling the person might be.</li> <li>- (Lack of experience) In the beginning, Greg lacked a lot of common sense. He often said things that worsen the situations.</li> </ul>

Beast (Herne hunter)	Black	White
<u>Shape:</u>  Organic shape:  (Requires people to break down the shapes as it is unpredictable and uncommon) - The beast has the ability to shape shift and it gives a big impact as he's unpredictable, making the audience more cautious about him.  Shape 2:  Holes: His body is the unison of faces of those he consumed.	- (Power) Everyone in the Unknown fear the Beast since he always lurk in the woods waiting for his victims to seek him (Death) - (Elegance and mystery) The Beast loves singing and he often sing when the woods are being chopped. He also has a great ability to manipulate his victims into thinking that they are hopeless. Greg fell for his deception and almost freeze to death in the snow.	- (Purity and virtue) Contrast with the black colour being used since the beast is cunning and seek those who are full with sorrow and fears. - (Mourning and death) The beast take lives of those who are lost. The beast himself may "the light" which is what people tend to look for as a way to escape when they don't have a will to live.  - a little bit of red/pink (real body) indicating bloods and danger.

- How the colours can be used to tell characters' personalities and foreshadow growth

- How does the style affects the mood of the animation?

Lighter and kid friendly, yet remain somewhat creepy which fits the mood of late October

### Cultural context:

- American culture on horror films

- American are more focus on how the supernatural comes to be and what it is (Wirt and Greg are in the unknown because they are drowning in real life and hence in the moment between life and death. Hence the unknown = afterlife.

- We found Beast's motive on the last episode and we, as audience, are more focus on how Wirt and Greg will get out of the unknown.

And since Wirt and Greg are children and Beast is portrayed as an ominous being. We have a strong prejudice on Beast since the beginning making him the villain without him doing anything. -> EP1 03:02 - "This isn't a place for children! Don't you know the Beast is afoot here" -> Cowan pg 216 - 217

"William Golding's classic novel 'Lord of the flies' is as disturbing as it is precisely because it concerns children, not adults" -> "Children are coded as innocent"

Pg. 132 "In America... death is a taboo topic, avoided in everyday conversation as if its very mention will invite disaster"

"40 percent of Americans believe in ghosts"

## Projected Fears: Horror Films and American Culture : Horror Films and American Culture (2005)

### On Dracula

“His monstrosity is not immediately visible, the threat not immediately apparent. This fear of the unknown must have resonated deeply with an America that had grown increasingly fearful of others”

-> Dracula, the antagonist is waiting for the time to strike just like the beast. This is the technique of ‘anticipation’ in terms of storytelling. The beast made an official appearance at the end of episode 4 demanding the woodsmen to tell him about the brothers’ whereabouts.

- American culture on horror cartoon movies/series

1. Happy Tree Friends (1999)

2. Corpse Bride (2005)

3. Monster house (2006)

4. Coraline (2009)

- Social significance (two Emmys) Cartoon Network’s culture on horror cartoon

5. Courage the cowardly Dog (1996)

6. The Grim Adventures of Billy & Mandy (2001)

7. Rooby Gloom (2006)

8. The marvellous misadventures of flapjack (2008)

Ans: Basically the late 90s to early 2000s seems to be the peak of horror animations that children can watch. There are some creepy elements in recent shows for ex Adventure time (2010) and Regular show (2009) but in my humble opinion, it doesn’t have strong horror elements like the former shows.

Conclusion:

- how’s the form or aesthetic of the animation correlates with its historical context?

- What to explore next if you have the chance?
- Why is over the garden wall significant (mentioned the death of Cartoon Network)

## List of figures:

Figure 1: Stride, D. (2019) *A song of ice and fire characters in Dante's hell, A Phuulish Fellow*. WordPress. Available at: <https://phuulishfellow.wordpress.com/2018/11/10/a-song-of-ice-and-fire-characters-in-dantes-hell/> (Accessed: October 17, 2022).

Figure 2: cartoonnetwork (2015) *Tome of the unknown | over the Garden Wall | Cartoon Network Studios Shorts, YouTube*. Cartoon Network. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-0vZeaIrFg> (Accessed: September 27, 2022).

Figure 3: Patrick McHale (no date) *Gravity Falls Wiki*. Available at: [https://gravityfalls.fandom.com/wiki/Patrick\\_McHale](https://gravityfalls.fandom.com/wiki/Patrick_McHale) (Accessed: October 10, 2022).

Figure 4: Over The Garden Wall: The Complete Series. Writ. Patrick McHale. Dir. Bert Youn. Cartoon Network, 2014. DVD.

Figure 5: Alighieri, D. and Longfellow, H.W. (2008) *The inferno: Canticle I of 'the divine comedy'*. New York?: Aegypan Press.

Figure 6: *Dante's Inferno* (2022) *KaiserScience*. Wordpress. Available at: <https://kaiserscience.wordpress.com/reading-connections/dantes-inferno/> (Accessed: October 15, 2022).

Figure 7: GamerCreator12345 (2015) *Over the garden wall is Dante's inferno (symbolism analysis), YouTube*. TREY the Explainer. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBg8tQyATIA&t=584s> (Accessed: October 10, 2022).

Figure 8: Dante's Inferno Seventh circle of Hell: Violence. *Dante's Inferno* (2022) *KaiserScience*. Wordpress. Available at: <https://kaiserscience.wordpress.com/reading-connections/dantes-inferno/> (Accessed: October 15, 2022).

Figure 9: MondoMedia (2007) *Happy Tree Friends - Eye Candy (EP #29), YouTube*. MondoMedia. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmXL6-F3vZQ> (Accessed: October 12, 2022).

Figure 10: Over The Garden Wall won 3 Emmys in 2015. Thill, S. (2015) *Cartoon Network's 'over the Garden Wall' wins three emmys, Cartoon Brew*. Cartoon Brew. Available at:

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