

# The Use of Color and Music in Audio Visual Language of Animated Film —Take *Coco* as An Example

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## ABSTRACT

As one of the most important artistic features of animated film, audio-visual language is developing constantly, which creates a lot of excellent animated film works. *Coco* is an outstanding example in this respect, which mainly talks about the wonderful adventure of a little boy who likes music in the underworld. The audio-visual language sublimates the theme of the movie, and lets the audience have a good visual and auditory experience, as well as helps the audience better understand what the film wants to express. Nowadays, in order to have a better development in animation audio-visual language, people need constant innovation so that better works can be presented to the audience. The most important point is that in terms of audio-visual language, this work has many points worth discussing. This paper mainly analyzes the audio-visual language of *Coco* in the use of color and music, and discusses of the development of it.

**Keywords:** *Audiovisual, color using, music, coco, animated film, development*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The audio-visual language in film and television animation is of great significance. In general, film animation does not need to restore the real world, but only pursues the animation drawing close to the real life. In fact, in reality, basically we can not find the same characters and scenes as in animation, so these characters and environment mostly depend on the imagination of animation creators and the presentation of works, and more rely on the audio-visual language of the works. Only by grasping the audio-visual language, can the film and television animation have a better development. In addition, improving the audio-visual language and making it humanized will help to create better film and television animation. From the perspective of artistic expression, audio-visual language is not only a creative expression language, but also a new language. As only with innovative, active and jumping thinking, and ensurance of rich imagination, can the audio-visual language in the film and television animation works be full of vitality and vitality [1]. The reason why *Coco* is selected for analysis is that *Coco* is extremely outstanding in audio-visual language, which is an absolutely successful example. Through the analysis of *Coco*, the charm and brilliance of audio-visual language, which makes the emotional and cultural expression of the whole film incisively and vividly, can be shown. The audio visual language of *Coco* reflects the attitude of Mexicans when they face death, as they do not regard death as terrible things, but the movie depicts the underworld very brilliantly.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF COCO

### 2.1. Overview of the Story

The film is about family and death. This story took place in Mexico. From a young age, the main character, Miguel wanted to be an excellent musician, and De la Cruz was his idol and spiritual mentor. But his great great grandfather abandoned his wife and daughter to pursue his music dream and never returned, his heartbroken great great grandmother made a family rule: no one in the family was allowed to touch music again. Therefore, Miguel could only hide his music dream in the attic. On the annual day of the dead, Miguel, in order to pursue his dream, accidentally crossed into the kingdom of the dead. If he wanted to return to the original world, he must get the blessing of his relatives, otherwise he would stay in the world of the dead forever. Miguel found that his idol, De la Cruz, might be his great great grandfather. Unfortunately, he was the villain who framed his real great great grandfather. But luckily, Miguel finally returned to the original world, his great grandmother also remembered her father, all misunderstandings were solved. Miguel's family also re embraced music.

### 2.2. Awards in Audio Visual Language

*Coco* is the 19th animated feature film of Pixar Animation Studio. In addition to winning the Oscar Best Animated

Feature, *Coco* also won several awards that was related to the audio visual language, such as “The Best Animated Movie Visual Effects Awards of the 16th Visual Effects Society Awards, USA”, “The best sound effect of animated film of the 54th Cinema Audio Society Awards, USA” and Oscar Best Original Song (“Remember Me”). These awards are enough to prove *Coco's* outstanding achievements in audio-visual language.

### **3. USE OF COLOR IN VISUAL LANGUAGE**

#### ***3.1. Visual Color and Mexican Culture***

As the saying goes, “the more national, the more global”. In the film, many of them are unique elements of Mexico. In order to study the national characteristics of Mexico, Pixar spent six years in Mexico to visit the local conditions and customs, which was amazing, but also expressed respect for the traditional culture of Mexico [4]. Although the town in *Coco* is fictional, the pattern, color, terrain and shape of the small town are modeled on the classic Mexican town with gorgeous colors, which not only makes the story more real, but also makes the place more imaginative. The use of such colors matches the traditional Mexican festival of the dead, also matches the magic characteristics of Mexican national characteristics. Yellow marigold repeatedly appears throughout the film, connecting the plot. The film also uses yellow to render the dead. For instance, in the room full of photos of the deceased ancestors, covered with marigold, although the photos are black and white, but the atmosphere of the whole room shows warmth. Furthermore, at the beginning, voice-over introduces the background of the story and the story of the protagonist’s family through the way of paper cutting and montage style long lens. Paper cutting is a Mexican ritual, which is directly linked to the theme of the film. The various and colorful paper cuts in the film are not simply the scene design, but the realistic portrayal of Mexican traditional national sacrifice [2]. This is a kind of cultural output showing the world Mexico with different traditional concepts, making the world understand and recognize Mexican culture, and making Mexico’s culture go to the world.

#### ***3.2. The Color Using of the Death World***

Usually, black and gray are used to render "death", but here, yellow marigold is used to render “death”, which gives the audience a new visual aesthetic experience, and is in line with the theme of “family relationship” in the film. Simultaneously, it also expresses the optimistic attitude of Mexican national culture towards death. Most of the movie’s main scenes are in the “underworld”, but the pictures are not gray, black and depressing as we usually think. Instead, they use gorgeous warm colors. The

film depicts the colorful scenes with warm tone and color, making the world of the dead and the people here beautiful. In this world, most of the characters are skeletons. Animation makes the bones after death become long eyebrows, colorful paintings and clothes on the face, crying and laughing, and various expressions. In dressing up, the use of various colors shows that there is still the right to pursue beauty in the world of death, and everything is beautiful. In the creation of details, the image of the characters can be lifelike. Besides, the world of the dead seems to be more colorful than the real world, and the lights are also dazzling. From the lights and buildings of the undead world, it can be seen that the living environment there is absolutely no worse than the real life, which can reflect that death does not represent the end of real life.

### **4. USE OF MUSIC IN AUDIO LANGUAGE**

#### ***4.1. Theme Song “Remember Me”***

As a theme song, “Remember me” has contributed a lot to the success of the film. It has appeared six times in the film, because this song let the hero Miguel fall in love with music, and later appeared in the undead world music competition, Miguel sang this song. Obviously, there is music in the world of the dead, so life here is not boring and sad. Most importantly, the last time Miguel sang this song was when he came back to the real world and sang to his great great grandmother, Coco. The memory that language could not arouse is inspired by music, telling her not to forget her father’s love for her. Finally, when Coco and Miguel sang the song, the memory was awakened and all misunderstandings were cleared. Every time “Remember Me” appears at the turning point of the movie. On the surface, Miguel’s love for music connects the whole story. However, music firmly sticks to the connotation of the festival of the dead and the feelings of Mexicans for family affection [3].

#### ***4.2. The Function of Music***

There are 35 songs in the whole movie. Actually, in addition to enriching the audio-visual experience of the film, the soundtrack also plays a role in expressing the character's personalities and plot development. At every critical moment, the music expresses the characters' psychological activities and implies the development of the plot. The music is closely related to the theme of the movie. The music in *Coco* not only brings the audience hearing enjoyment, but also promotes the development of the plot. It is music that dissolves the contradictions among generations of the whole family, eliminates misunderstandings, and keeps family ties forever.

## 5. AUDIO-VISUAL LANGUAGE IN COCO

Mexicans do not see death in any other place. Mexicans believe that death is the highest meaning of life, and life and death complement each other to complete a life cycle. Therefore, on the “day of the dead” every year, Mexicans hold a memorial ceremony, but there is no sad emotion. They even sing and dance all night to celebrate the annual reunion with their deceased relatives. But elsewhere, death is an extremely sad thing. For example, standing in front of a tombstone crying because of the death of relatives and feel depressed and uncomfortable. Through the use of audio-visual language, the film lets the audience experience a fantastic journey of the undead with Miguel, appreciate the unique cultural heritage of the Mexican nation and create a world full of love and beauty. It tells the audience that as long as the family can always remember you, that death is not terrible but to live happily in another world. The audio-visual language brings the audience joy, anger and sadness, as the audience’s presence and empathy can express what the movie wants to express.

## 6. DISCUSSION

Through the unique and colourful pictures and music, the movie wakes up the sense of national identity of Mexican Americans, thus subverting the audience’s tired reality aesthetics and making the audience enjoy the beauty. The audio-visual language of film and television animation combines film/television art with painting art to form a special audio-visual language. When the audiences watch the animation works, they get a certain impact on the vision, and then the resonance in emotion can be aroused. The development of film and television animation is an organic evolutionary process, which is the result of interaction between creators and audience. It mainly discusses the reason and effectiveness of information transmission on the basis of communication and psychology, rather than simply the commercial purposes of audio-visual pleasure [6]. In the actual development of film and television animation, audio-visual language is constantly exploring and experimenting. It is not to obtain economic benefits, but to help the animation film to avoid distortion, so that the audience can get a real and vivid experience. According to the current trend, people begin to pay more attention to animated films. Audio-visual language needs continuous development, as it is related to the communication effect of animation works and it can affect the emotional communication between the audience and the works. Therefore, people should constantly create new things and make the innovation of audio-visual language, such as conducting more research form a professional production team so that the animation industry can continue to develop and let the audience have a better viewing experience. In fact, people have also developed a new audio-visual mode system, which can visualize the dynamic structure of media fragments and

provide meaningful help for media designers [5]. Nowadays, with the rapid spread of information, the benefits of audio-visual language in film animation can not only bring a feast and enjoyment, but also help people to understand the content of the works.

## 7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the use of audio-visual language in *Coco* makes the whole film more vivid, depicting the death world as a colorful world and directly presenting Mexican culture. The addition of music makes the theme clearer and deeper. *Coco* is a film with great achievements in audio-visual language, which is an excellent example. In the future, more and more films like *Coco* will appear to help the audience better understand the emotions the film wants to express. The actual development of film and television animation is inseparable from the support of audio-visual language, which is related to the communication effect of animation works and affects people’s understanding of the works. Therefore, attention should be paid to the actual development of audio-visual language and animated film related personnel should do more research and development in audio-visual language, so as to make the film and television animation art glow with stronger vitality and realize its existence value.

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