The Development and Influence of Japanese Animated Film Style

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ABSTRACT

Japanese animated films have a history of more than 100 years since 1917. From 1973, Belladonna was shortlisted in the main competition unit of the Berlin Film Festival to 2002, the Ghibli animation Spirited Away won the Golden Bear award of the Berlin Film Festival. Japanese animated films have entered the public view and gradually gained a place in the world film industry.The reason why Japanese animation film can achieve today's achievements is that it has produced its own personality in the process of continuous development. This paper hopes that through a more in-depth understanding of the history of Japanese animation films, and through some classic Japanese animation films, it can summarize the commonalities that they can stand out from the world films. The paper intends to explore a variety of factors that affect the development of Japanese animation films from live action films and the impact of Japanese animation films on world films.

Keywords: *Animated movies, Japanese cartoons, live-action movies*

1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the development history of Japanese animated films, it can be found that, like the development process of all films in the world, Japanese animated films can be traced back to the guidance of world classic films from the aspects of narrative style, audio-visual style and soundtrack. By going deep into the history of Japanese animation films and comparing the early Japanese animation films and other national animation films and live action films in the same period, this paper explores what different aspects of films from other countries have influenced the development stage of Japanese animation films. Later, in the process of continuous development of Japanese animation films, they learn from and innovate on the carrier of animation, and develop a unique style different from live action films and even other animation films in the world. And what benefits did the Japanese animated films entering the golden age bring to the development of live action films after 1980, and what kind of relationship they complement each other, which brought many high-quality works to the world films. By exploring the above problems, we can get the development trend of Japanese animated films and live action films in the future, as well as help to better explore the development direction of both sides in the future.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF JAPANESE ANIMATED FILMS

2.1 Narrative style

2.1.1 introduction of "adult" realistic theme and realistic style

Japanese animated films originated in the 1920s. At that time, Japanese filmmakers introduced the most advanced animation production technology into Japan. Many cartoonists began to try to make "comic films" and began to create by imitating the works of foreign animation companies. [1]But at that time, because animation technology had just started, people had not made a more in-depth exploration in terms of production process and purpose. Therefore, the Japanese animated films at that time were short in volume and simple in plot. [2]In character design, they still imitated European and American animated films to personify animals to increase interest. Such animated films were mostly used in war propaganda at that time. The limitations of their themes and the lack of technology led to the narrative style of Japanese

animated films being limited to interest and fragmentation at that time.

Until after World War II, Japanese Animation Company, an animation studio, was acquired by Toei Tokyo and TOEI ANIMATION CO., LTD. was established. At that time, Toei Tokyo hoped to create "Oriental Disney" through the development of the animation industry, so it shot the first color long animated film The White Snake Enchantress in the history of Japanese film in 1958. The film length of The White Snake Enchantress is 70 minutes. Compared with the previous Japanese animation films, The White Snake Enchantress has not completely separated from the impression of the previous European and American animation films, but it has been greatly improved in the narrative structure. Firstly, it refers to the narrative content and setting of the live action film Madame White Snake, and has the idea of making The White Snake Enchantress into an "adult emotional drama represented by love drama The White Snake Enchantress not only opened the long era of Japanese animated films, but also provided new ideas for the choice of narrative style of animated films.[2]

2.1.2 transcendence of Japanese animated films

Film is the art of narration. How to break and reorganize the narrative time and space is the eternal motif of film. Animated films are no exception. In the long development process of Japanese animated films, although there are innovations in theme, setting and so on. However, its core is still inseparable from the "adventure story of boys and girls", but Kon Satoshi's works break this tradition. Almost all of Kon Satoshi's works break away from the most classic linear narration and reorganize the space-time of the film in different dimensions in a more cinematic way. The attempt of complex and diverse camera language makes the narrative level of Kon Satoshi's works exceed that of live action films and become a model for many live action films after the 21st century.[3]

2.2 Image style

2.2.1 Tezuka and the birth of cinematic storyboard

Back in 1942, a 14-year-old boy named Osamu Tezuka began his animation career after watching spider and tulip and the early Chinese animation The Princess of Iron Fan. Tezuka is an indispensable figure in the history of Japanese animated films. He first introduced the concept of cinematic storyboarding in comics. This novel technique made Tezuka become the most famous cartoonist in Japan at that time. At this time, Toei Animation has also completed the production and distribution of The White Snake Enchantress. When

considering the production of the next animated film, they fell in love with Tezuka's cartoon MY SON-GO-KU and decided to adapt it into an animated film. However, due to the different dimensions of image and cartoon, although Tezuka's cartoon has the characteristics of film segmentation, it still serves the plane cartoon format, but the film is a vertical space-time art. Therefore, it is obviously unrealistic to directly copy the cartoon segmentation as a film segmentation. Therefore, in the creation process of Journey to the West, the second animated film work of Toei Animation, the animators made cinematic modifications to MY SON-GO-KU, so that the "cinematic segmentation" of the original cartoon was transformed into a real animated film segmentation with a sense of film.[2]

2.2.2. Animated films with cinematic features after 1980

After the Journey to the West was highly praised, Toei Animation continued to produce the next animated film Anju to Zushio Maru, but it was a pity that this work did not set off a new upsurge because of its theme. But on the other side, the Omasu Production founded by Tezuka was established and produced Japan's first TV animation Mighty Atom in 1963. The success of Mighty Atom has gathered the upsurge of TV animation, making the animated film enter an embarrassing period of nearly ten years. It was not until 1984 that Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind

was released and entered the top 10 of The Movie Times. The "cinematicism" of Japanese animated films is really recognized. Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind not only broke away from the shackles of "children's orientation" in the subject matter of the story, but also took the lead in the camera consciousness and light and shadow change consciousness in the lens design of the Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind in Europe and America, which also laid a foundation for the lens use of grammar and the sense of space of virtual reality in Japanese animation films.

2.3 Soundtrack style

2.3.1 the product of the combination of eastern and Western cultures

When the sound live action film was born, the animated film had been born for nearly a decade. Therefore, in the development of film sound, animated films and live action films can be said to be synchronized. The pattern of early Japanese animated films followed that of European and American animated films, and both were greatly influenced by musicals in film soundtrack, especially film songs. For example, in the film Spider and Tulip, the song sung by the role of

spider not only adds auditory interest to the film, but also plays an auxiliary narrative role through the lyrics of the song. This was a popular usage of animation music in the world at that time. Even today, many Disney films still use this form of musical performance. [4]However, when Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind came out in the 1960s, the partner of Joe Hisaishi and Hayao Miyazaki made the Japanese animation soundtrack enter the golden age. At this time, the Japanese animation film broke away from the imitation of the western film soundtrack and formed a unique music style by combining the characteristics of Japanese and Western Music. And began to prefer to emphasize the overall theme music of animation, which is gradually different from the characteristics of European and American film soundtrack, which emphasizes the theme music of characters.

2.3.2. Exploration and achievements of electronic music

Japan has the best audio equipment manufacturer in the world, which provides a high-quality sound source for the development of Japanese electronic soundtrack. Japan is the first country in the world to use electronic musical instruments to dub animation, which also makes Japanese animation have a more unique timbre charm. After the 1980s, the use of electronic music in Japanese animated films has been perfect.[5] They do not simply use electronic synthesizers, but match many national musical instruments according to the film on the basis of electronic musical instruments, such as the Erhu element of the soundtrack of Princess Mononoke. While catering to the preferences of the audience, they do not forget the sad tone of the imported film. For another example, Akira, which was later called the monument of Japanese animation film, used the combination of Indonesian traditional percussion instrument Gamelan and electronic music to form one of the most unique sci-fi soundtracks in film history.

3. THE INFLUENCE OF JAPANESE ANIMATED FILMS ON WORLD LIVE ACTION FILMS AFTER 1980

3.1. Lens language

When talking about Japanese animated films after 1980, the works of animation director Kon Satoshi are a part that can never be skipped. Kon Satoshi's grasp of lens language, especially the application of montage techniques, is very important in the history of animation films in the world. From the beginning of Kon Satoshi's first animated film "Perfect Blue" in 1989, his mastery of film audio-visual language can be seen. Coupled with his own detached story theme and extremely mature and advanced narrative mode, he played an enlightening role for many later live action film directors. Among

them, Darren Arenovsky is the most obvious one who can see the shadow of Kon Satoshi in his works. In his Requiem of a Dreams, the protagonist Marian curls up in the bathtub. She buries her head in the water, quite like a baby in the womb. Suddenly, she starts shouting crazy in the water. This series of storyboard highly coincided with the scene of the protagonist Mima in the bathroom in Kon Satoshi's work Perfect Blue. Later, Darren himself admitted that this group of lenses paid tribute to Kon Satoshi. In addition to the Requiem of a Dream, Darren's Black Swan is called the real-life version of the Perfect Blue. They are similar in lens language, narrative structure and character setting. It can be seen that Perfect Blue, as an animated film director, has a profound influence on the creation of later live action films.

3.2. Expression of ideas

After the 1980s, Japanese animated films began to be no longer satisfied with the traditional narrative mode and ideological expression, and began to explore the deeper connotation that animation can express. The Ghost in the Shell is such a work that breaks away from the tradition. It has a profound philosophical discussion on the significance of mankind and cyborg on the basis of science fiction works. Such a story core passed on a new impression to the audience at that time through the extremely realistic painting style, and also brought new inspiration to many live action film directors. The Matrix (1998) is a work inspired by the Ghost in the Shell. Its story expression and art design refer to the Ghost in the Shell to a certain extent. However, compared with the Ghost in the Shell, the Matrix adopts a more Hollywood style plot structure. This makes the Matrix and Ghost in the shell both discuss philosophy in the context of science fiction, but the style of the former is not so obscure and gloomy. In addition, the advancement of shooting techniques of "matrix" itself makes it another science fiction classic in film history.[6]

3.3. Aesthetic style

"A power boy stands on the ruins of Tokyo. Everyone will say it's Otomo Katsuhiro." This is Hayao Miyazaki's comment on the classic Japanese cyberpunk animation film Akira. Akira was selected as one of the best 20 science fiction films in film history by the world authoritative film publication Wired in 2002. It is the only Asian Film and the only animated film in the list. Akira introduces the elements of the world science fiction classics 2001 Space Odyssey and Blade Runner into animation, creating a new wave of Japanese cyberpunk animated films. At the same time, Akira, as the first Japanese animation film to land in the U.S. and European markets, made many North American and European fans see serious animation different from

Disney animation for the first time, and also became an opportunity for Western audiences to contact Japanese animation on a large scale. Therefore, Akira not only inspired Japanese animated films, but also had a far-reaching impact on world films and even other cultures outside the film. The authors of Hollywood science fiction films such as Looper, Chronicle and some game works almost mentioned the inspiration brought to them by Akira, not to mention the flashing red motorcycle in Spielberg's number Ready Player One. Until today, even those who have never seen Akira will have a certain impression of the elements and pictures in Akira, because Akira, as a classic of a generation of animated films, has long penetrated into all aspects of people's life through its unique aesthetic style.

4. CONCLUSION

To sum up, Japanese animated films started from learning the narrative style, image style and soundtrack of western films. In the process of development, they broke away from children's narrative and simplified expression, and added unique colors to world films by virtue of their own unique culture and rapidly developing technology. As Japanese animated films are seen by more and more people, some advanced techniques and ways of thinking expression have also been learned by some live action film directors. Nowadays, as an independent film type, animated films play an indispensable role in the world film. They complement and learn from each other with live action films, which has brought new vitality to the world film.

However, with the increasing importance of Japanese animated films, people began to try a new matching method between Japanese animated films and live action films: live action adaptation. However, after the live action adaptation of Ghost In The Shell and Alita: Battle Angel, people's enthusiasm for live action remaking of Japanese animated films seems to be gradually declining. Even Hollywood, which is well industrialized and has developed visual effect level, has no way to restore the original feeling of some Japanese animation films. This is not only related to the production level, but also related to the adaptation techniques, the target audience, and even the attitude of the creator when the real person is adapted. Nowadays, the special effects technology of films is more and more developed, and the creative techniques of animation are more and more abundant. In the process of creation, both of them will deliberately learn each other's mode and apply each other's advantages to their own works. Such development has a benign effect on both live action films and animated films, and it is also an inevitable development path for both. However, there are still essential differences between live action films and Japanese animation films. An excellent animation work can be deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. It must have its irreplaceable advantages. When such a work is considered to be remade as a live action version, it should be considered particularly. How to balance the core of animation itself and the visual effect after adaptation is a problem worthy of discussion in the reality of Japanese animation films.

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