Appreciation of the Classic Horror Movies of the 20th Century

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ABSTRACT

The twentieth century is an important period for the development of the film industry as the world film has achieved a leap from silent to sound, black and white to colorful. However, there is no Internet and advanced equipment, which made shooting and post-production very challenging. In particular, not only some sci-fi or horror films, but also many props and post-composite movies with virtual components need to be reflected in the actual shooting. These are reflected in lots of classic movies of the last century, especially the horror movies. The reason that they are called classics is that there are filming and production methods that the film scholars should understand and learn from. Therefore, in this paper, the author will start from the three films Jurassic Park as well as Jaws and Psycho to analyze the design of movie props, editing methods, and the choice of movie soundtrack when the technology of film was less advanced in the last century, in order to find out the measures that good filmmakers used to bring horror movies to the audience perfectly.

Keywords: Classic horror movies, 20th century, props, editing, music.

1. INTRODUCTION

When filmmakers want to make a movie (when the script and actors are already in place), their first thought is on-site shooting, recording during shooting, post-production synthesis and editing, etc. Using the same steps to make a horror movie, but in order to mention the word thriller, they will pay more attention to the use of props, editing techniques, and music and sound effects. In the movie, various props play a role in the setting, which could truly reflect the historical outlook of different times, strongly foil the artistic atmosphere needed by the plot and deeply help depict the personality of the characters. At the same time, it could give the film creation to inspiration and become a real material and technical basis to a certain extent. Film is a comprehensive art, and the final audience to see the film on the screen sound and painting is a collective creation of many artists and technical experts. The editing staff must have a deep understanding and grasp of the film's creative intention, overall conception, theme content, character plot, even the scene and atmosphere together, with the director and photographers, in order to make the film under the scissors shine brilliancy. Film music is generated from film, rooted in film, dependent on film but full of independent soul, even less restrictive than film. Music gets inspiration in film and conveys the spirit of music itself, causing people's resonance. Through the auditory experience, the audience's psychological feeling forms a visual image and three-dimensional sense of auditory image, thus making the screen image more rich, vivid and real, greatly strengthening the expressive force and appeal of the film art. If a complete horror film lacks any part of the modification above, it will greatly impact the effect, which is also the reason why the author will start the discussion from these three directions.

2. ANALYSIS OF PROPS

Props refer to movable objects in the scenery, especially those objects with important functions in the story. In this way, props are not as simple as "things" used to dress up the scenery. They are likely to be responsible for the graphic proof of the genre; they can also be used to advance the story; more importantly, they may also have a metaphorical meaning. Regardless of the theme of the movie, the use of props requires careful study. However, for thrillers, many creatures may not exist in the real world, so realistic props are needed to meet the needs of the movie.

For example, the era when Jurassic Park was filmed did not have the high-end CG technology today, so many effects in the production of big movies were achieved by making props. There are different types of dinosaurs in the film, and the design of the prop set on the dinosaurs are also different. Spielberg's requirements for movies are particularly high. He hired paleontologist Jack Horner to supervise the design of dinosaurs, thus turning dinosaurs into animals rather than monsters, and made many dinosaur models. The protagonist of the film is Velociraptor, because they are not very big, basically the height of human beings, so the designer combined the dinosaur and the human structure, so that living people can enter the body of the dinosaur and drive the dinosaur to move and walk [1]. Movies are made using models, which are real objects. And these models do not need special effects to simulate light and shadow, they use real light and shadow effects and are flawless. Those models were all supervised by Stan Winston, and they were carefully carved and processed, almost like living things. It has been more than 20 years, and no documentary or dinosaur movie can make the dinosaur texture of Jurassic Park. Its dinosaur design has influenced many dinosaur art and culture today. Many works have learned from Jurassic Park the image of Tyrannosaurus Rex with a broad head, for example, the raised mouth, raised eyelids, sunken eye sockets, and three bulges behind the upper jaw and nose. At that time, this kind of mechanical dinosaur, which relied on special effects makeup technology, immediately caused a great response when it appeared on the screen, and it became one of the most popular monster movies in history. With the continuous development of technology, the simulation level of the mechanical dinosaur model has been greatly upgraded, with more detailed processing and design in expression details and skin texture. As a continuation of this IP, Jurassic World 2 has always inherited the excellent style and magnificent scenes of the previous work. In the film, a combination of machinery and dinosaurs and CG is still adopted [4].

In the movie Jaws, Spielberg asked for 4 shark models at the time (three were involved in the filming, and only one of them that have been kept on display at the Universal Film Museum). The shark in the film is a full-size aerodynamic prop shark. The crew named the shark "Bruce" after Spielberg's lawyer Bruce Ramer. Drag with a cable about 100 meters long, this shark does not have a lower abdomen; the other two "platform sharks", one is used to shoot the shark seen from left to right, and the left side will not appear in the lens. Multiple sets of pneumatic hoses exposed inside can be seen. The other is the opposite, and it is used to take a shot of sharks from right to left, and the internal mechanical structure is exposed on the right side. These props were designed by art director and designer Joe Alves from July to September 1973, and from November 1973 to April of the following year by

Raleigh Ha in Sun Valley, California, produced by a film equipment rental company. A total of as many as 40 special effects staff participated in the production, and Bob Matty, who was famous for producing the giant octopus in the 1954 version of 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, oversaw it. After the prop shark is made, it is transported to the location by truck. In early July 1974, the platform that was used to drag the two side-looking sharks collapsed while descending to the bottom of the sea. The crew had to send a team of divers to search in the sea. A total of more than 10 operators are required to control all the moving parts of these models [2]. It has to be said that Spielberg's pursuit of the shark model despite financial difficulties and poor shooting conditions is one of the keys to the success of this film.

3. ANALYSIS OF EDITING TECHNIQUE —CUTTING ON ACTION

If the director gives life to a movie, editing can be the soul of a movie. If the movie wants an interesting soul, then it needs superb and ingenious communication skills, as a saying goes, editing can make a pig run faster. How scary a thriller should be is a very simple and difficult question. Even the best thrillers cannot be thrilled to the end, both in terms of the content of the film and the psychological acceptance of the audience. The horror interval is too short, and the audience cannot accept it psychologically. The horror is too long, which may lead to too long and boring. To create an overall splendid horror effect, it is necessary to grasp the rhythm, and this rhythm is often through time and space Staggered conversion and the organic combination of film elements and structures are realized. Therefore, the suspense and tension that is built during a dramatic and horrifying scene keeps the audience on their toes and coming back for more. Horror films work because of the editors' efforts and decisions [3].

The American film Jaws mainly wins the audience's love with suspense. The production of many thrilling scenes in this film should be attributed to the skilled editing skills of editor Fultz. One of the important plots: the seaside lens, always attacking Alex around the white shark, here uses a sequence that about the shark attacking to prove that the editor is equally important to the suspense of the film and the director. A commonly used editing technique is to control the length of the shot in a specific occasion. The scene of the giant white turtle attacking Alex is the longest shot of the entire scene, which lasts for more than 30 seconds. It is this exceptional long shot that establishes the calm and stable atmosphere of the scene, so that the editor can create suspense and terror layer by layer on this basis. When the plot developed to the point that the attack of the white turtle was inevitable, the length of the shot was reduced from an average of 2 to 3 seconds to 1/13 of a second. Almost before shooting the actual scene of

the white turtle attack, to be precise, from the first lens to the nineteenth lens, the time of each shot was an average of 2 to 3 seconds. This scene developed to the first "illusion" that Brody observed. When Brody woke up from the panic and easily returned to the chair by the beach, the editor once again extended the lens time twice, which is equivalent to the 18-second length in the front mirror that stabilizes the audience's emotions, so that they do not produce any Sense of fear. Soon, shots of about 2 to 3 seconds on average reappeared, until 16-second-long shots were reproduced. Immediately after the photo shoot, there is a very long shot of Alex floating on a raft, which used a very similar shooting angle to later seeing that Alex was attacked by a turtle. Before shooting with this strangely long lens, the audience had already had an illusion of safety. After using Alex to lay on a raft to show that he was safe, an old man accused Brody of being timid and afraid of water. After a minute and a half shot of Brody's two children running on the beach appeared on the screen. Then came the last long shot before the white turtle attacked. Several shooting methods of this mirror are intended to ease the tension of the audience before the shark launches the attack. A romantic song sounded, Ellen stroked Brody's neck, and the length of the camera was relatively slow to 8 seconds. In an instant, the photographer took a shot of a group of people swimming, followed by a close-up shot of a water swimmer at a speed of 1/13 second. This is the shortest shot in the entire film. The enthusiastic swimming scene successfully launched five quick shots of splash back, which aroused the fanaticism of the audience. Two boys playing with dogs flashed on the screen. A raft floated on the water. At this time, the audience undoubtedly had a strong suspense. In the end, a set of long shots suggested that the white turtle is about to attack Alex, reproducing the scene of him lying on the raft earlier. Editing can not only be used to enhance the sense of horror, but also can produce many other feelings and emotions. The editor can make a movie or destroy a movie. It is through studying the editing lens of a few minutes in Jaws that we can easily recognize the importance of editing.

4. ANALYSIS OF MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS

Sound fills your day-to-day life. You hear the birds, the traffic and maybe even the cows if you are lucky. Noise not only immerses you in your daily life, but also alerts you [7]. Sound is the basic and indispensable part of our life. When it comes to movie music, one view is that it is the main force of the entire movie. Without its rendering, the entire movie will be calm, plain, and bleak. Obviously, horror and thriller films are the perfect interpretation of this view-music and sound can be said to give horror films the soul of horror. When people are watching some silent films, it is difficult to integrate into the atmosphere of the movie or video, but with the help of sound and sound effects, it is easy to get the information in the video and give the own reactions. The so-called different types of films have different functions in the soundtrack: in romance films, it is tear-inducing and sensational; in action films, it provides driving force for the picture; and in science fiction films, it can lead the audience into the drama quickly and identify with the set scene. As for the soundtrack of horror films, in addition to all the above-mentioned effects, it also opens a new field-the highly combined use of music and sound effects [6]. While highlighting the horror atmosphere, the music and sound effects are deepening the sense of fear through the joint action of vision and hearing and ingrain a piece of music deeply in the audiences' minds, like a "ghost possessed" day and night. If movie fans hear a certain piece of music, they will reflexively think of the corresponding plot, and feel fear. Bernard Herman's soundtrack for Psycho fully proves this point.

Psycho was born in 1960, the special effects of the movie at that time were far less developed than today. It is necessary to design a thriller scene of the bathroom murder "knife into the flesh" and use it as the climax part of determining the success or failure of the movie. It is very difficult to plan, shoot and produce it. In the short 45-second part of the film, it took the crew nearly 7 days of shooting time, and the camera shifted up to 60 times. In the post-production process, director Hitchcock originally thought that using fast and sharp editing and multi-angle shots to restore the extremely real murder process was enough, so he did not intend to add additional sound effects. But when he heard Bernard Herman's extremely sharp violin tone, he immediately changed his mind. Finally, the murder part in the bathroom of Psycho creates a sound atmosphere of tearing the flesh through the repeated acrimonious string sound, realizes the "sense of interaction" between hearing and vision, and contributes to a chilling viewing effect. After the film was released, the exquisite interpretation of the bathroom scene was commendable. Herman's music can be described as a great contribution. The "scream and scream" played by string music is even more famous in film history and become a classic to be imitated in the future. The music of thrillers is sometimes reflected in a way of psychological suggestion, implanting fear into the subconscious mind of the audience, allowing the fear to spread quietly from the depths of the heart. Anyone familiar with horror movies knows that a long period of silence is used to create a sense of tension and anticipation, and then a loud noise erupts in an unexpected moment, or to amplify and slow down common sound effects (creaking wooden doors slowly Slow opening, the ticking of the tap, the sound of slowly flipping the newspaper, etc.) are the most used sound design methods for horror films. The sound of teeth tearing and

bone breaking when Jaws devours humans [5], as well as the broken, sharp discordant scales, add a lot of color to the film and give the audience a very real feeling. In the entire preparation of fear, it is better to use discordant intervals such as major second or minor second, major seventh or minor seventh, augmented fourth or diminished fifth to imply terror, and use erratic sound field and a large amount of added reverb to tear away the nerves of anxiety and waiting, which will be more exciting than direct rendering.

5. CONCLUSION

In fact, the three parts mentioned above are indispensable parts for any type of film, but objectively speaking, they are even more indispensable in horror films. Horror films will lose a lot of real visual effects without the support of props, and the audience experience will be greatly reduced. Editing is the soul of a movie. Even with good material, if the editor's rhythm is not in place, a lot of the atmosphere that may have been created will be lost. Sound is also a common way to highlight horror in horror movies. Relying solely on vision is scary. If the filmmaker increases the auditory experience, fear will double. In the age when there is no advanced production technology, the audience has to admire those film artists, they really put a lot of effort in the film. The art of film enriches people life and allows them to obtain information about the teachings, beliefs and values of daily life, the way of life and fashion. It will help people escape the trivialities and pains of daily life for a moment, temporarily forget the suffering and injustice of the world, gain vent, and comfort, and resonate with emotions. In the future, the study of movies will continue, and people will find more artistic value and wonders in them.

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