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ANALYSIS IN ANIMATION BASED ON ROLAND BARTHES' THEORY OF AUDIENCE AND SEMIOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Having the ability to emerge different fields of art from graphics, painting and design, to music and cinema, animation is able to make any imagination real and express any thought. The unlimited expansion of technique in animation makes critique difficult. The aim of this research is to come up with a framework through which the analysis of animation becomes simple. To this end, the hypothesis is that: signifier (form) and signified (content), that are two inseparables, are located in the innermost parts of the content of the film as signs. The audience enjoys the ideas inside the movie when themes in the film can juxtapose with his/her emotional, spiritual and psychological characteristics. Via this relationship and knowledge, one can obtain the goal of the research. Thus, the questions are: 1. What are the signs in animation? 2. Who are the real audiences? 3. Whether Roland Barthes' theory of semiology is helpful in deeper relationship between the audience and the meaning of the film? During the research, one of the results was the notion that semi logical studies are very important in animation studies. Social, textual, and interpretative codes (icon, metaphor, symbol) and semi logical systems of the image ranged from those of motion, linguistics, to story are all helpful and determinable in animation movie analysis. Roland Barthes' theories are useful in the chart of elements for animation analysis.

Keywords: *Animation, Analysis, Audience, Sign, Motion Picture Codes, Roland Barthes*

INTRODUCTION

Not only it is difficult to define animation, but it also is more difficult to reach to a framework for examination of relational and sign systems in animation. The framework we are to attain is more difficult since it is more conceivable if we approach it via cinema that is the most similar art to it; the problem is there are different and expansive frameworks in cinema (Inanloo and Lilian, 2013). Obviously, one of the most effective methods of advertisements is animation movies. Being able to merge a large number of arts from graphic, painting, and design to music and cinema, animation can make real any sort of imagination and relate any idea. In the last decades, the progress in the technology of film and animation has lead to a reverberation in the definition of animation and also has resulted in such thin border between animation and cinema that the semiotic studies of cinema would be impossible without considering animation into account. Semiotics, also, is a new trend in the thinkers' studies, it backs to thousands of years ago.

The creation of hieroglyphics was one of the most noticeable efforts of humanity to make use of semiotic for stating something. The semiotics method of study has not omitted any field and has tried to encompass all human activities. Along with linguistics, semiotics of arts is one of the most important fields in semiotics. Among arts, cinema since many years ago and animation recently have been in a direct relationship to everyday life of people and one of the most applicable and attractive fields of art for the study of different signs. Metz and Louis Lamslev have allocate a large part of their studies on this field. The emergence of animation was because of forming imagination and making paintings moving. To specify a border, we can say that any motion picture that cannot be named cinema is in the realm of animation.

Because of the unlimited expansion of techniques in animation, there are some obstacles in its analysis, critique and study. One of the earliest techniques in animation that is close to cinema and is considered as one of the basics of animation and has been experienced before the adventure of cinema was the technique of stop motion or pixilation.

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In this technique, real human or puppet is put in front of the camera rather than a painting or cartoon. It is like some frames are taken, the position of the object or human changes a bit and then, the next frame is taken. This technique is being used for merging live actor and imaginative object of character. Surreal effects such as walking on the space and getting absent are still possible. A wool jacket can be alive and crawl on the ground, a seat can have human characteristics and have emotional relationship with humans. This type of animation is being used for action movies as special effects. One of the most famous animators of the last years who made such movies is Norman MacLaren. He has utilized a wide range of metaphorical signs in his works particularly in neighbors, the story of the chair, and microphone. Generally, the realm of animation is overwhelmed with surreal ideas and for analyses of it, we need to know the audience. Definitely, only when we have alert and knowledgeable audiences and critiques, we'll have creative animation works, and then, the work of the critique would be worthwhile also. Considering the familiar signs in movies and the attraction between the movie and the audience, in this article, the goal of audience and the critique in watching an animation movie are examined and then the semiotic codes and signs were studied.

Finally, according to the theories of Roland Barthes, we attained a summary of his ideas on the need of the audience and semiotic systems in animation analysis that is the study's result.

Audience:

In case the audience and the critique do not have a specific goal or approach in watching a movie, there wouldn't be analysis of film. The spectators won't go to a theatre to gather some information and relate them for others in a unique method. What is information in animation depends on the elements from which the animation movie forms, the way people and audience define it, the way it is connected to the world, and what goals should be considered for the movie analysis. The approach the audience or the critique chooses is for the most part related to the reason he/she wants to analyze it. Some may examine a movie just to prove an approach or method derived from it. An analyst starts his work with a specific way of analysis that is mostly derived from literary, psychological, linguistic or philosophical approaches. He, then, selects a movie that is suitable for that approach. Previously, the analysis method was of highest significance and if someone did not have a specific method before beginning, he was vulnerable to being considered as a confused and inexperienced person. The problem was with one analytical method for any movie or subject, analyses almost all were being formed as similar and many attractive and complexity of the movie were being neglected. As a result, the movie was being considered as something boring. It is while, the analysis of the audience and the critique should aim for showing attractive parts of the film and conflicts of the movie should be analyzed by her. So, via these methods in analysis, for making it easy, the right and fundamental revision was encountered to obstacles. Roland Barthes and other novel analysts revolutionized analysis by expanding linguistics and semiotics. Considering the audience and of signs, they tried to see all signal and pictorial parts of the film (Islami, 2009).

Semiotics

Years ago Saussure predicted a science named semiology in his psychological studies. This science became more and more expanded and entered all aspects of life. As a research method that entered the realm of science since 1950, not only semiotics encompasses all things we consider as signs in everyday life, but it also refers to anything that signifies something else. So, the most general definition of semiology can be considered that of Umberto Eco: "Semiology is related to anything that can be considered a sign" (Chandler, 2008). He states somewhere else that "A sign is all that defines something in place of something else based on a social contract." "Semiology is related to yielding meaning and representation. The field of semiology is so wide that it encompasses all fields in humanities. A multi-disciplinary field about which Kei Elam says about its expansion that "The realm of semiology is so expansive that one cannot confine it just to one field of study and is so multi-facet and that we cannot decrease it to a method" (Elam, 2003). Because of the same expansion of the realm, semiotic discussions are formed in philosophy, aesthetics and communication. Parts that consider the process of significance and understanding meanings behind the message is related to communication, where it concentrates on semiotic systems of arts, it works of aesthetics, and where it focuses on etymology and the way it forms,

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it partly enters the realm of philosophy. But, where these signs come from? Definitely, they are everywhere, from the language we speak by to flags and computer icons.

Saussur provides two basic and important element about signs that frequent in all studies in this field: the signifier (the form or the vocal image) that means the existent thing we see and the signified (the content or meaning that the signifier (form) refers to it which means the absent case that we just feel or imagine. These two Saussurian concepts are inseparable like flip and flop of one sheet” (Saussour, 1965).

“These two elements have been enhanced by Piercing significance and have formed into three categories: 1. Representation, 2. Interpretant, and 3. Object. In this pattern, Pierce emphasizes on the role of audience as the interpreter and hence, has started a way for his successors who focus on the audience. The aspects that are considered for any sign are basic debates in semiotics. Saussour presented signs with their linguistic function but Pierce defined them via image” (Sojoudi, 2003). We should take into consideration that cinema and photography utilize the iconic signs continuously and we can consider iconic signs as the basis of cinema. As one of the most important elements of cinema and the factor of making various genres, storytelling consciously selects iconic and indexical signs. Animation goes further and utilizing iconic, indexical and symbolic signs becomes a very suitable context for semiotic studies as Pierce states anything that enjoys the all three types of signs has the most complete signs. Successors of Saussour and Pierce furthered semiology to new areas. Finding new aspects and putting new debates continues and will continue as the era of semiology is very vast.

Louis Helms who founded the Kopenhagen School was one of the successors of Pierce and Saussour. He has had a great influence on Roland Barthes’, Aljrida Gernass’, and Christian Metz’ structuralism (Abridged from: Chandler 2008).

Motion Picture, Codes and Signs

There is another definition in semiotics that is of crucial importance in motion picture studies. Relationships that are in basics and the structure of motion picture and can be used in semiotics analysis:

1. *Juxtaposition*: Relations between elements that can be put together to form a unit in a higher level. In other words, juxtaposition in a text is the companionship of some signs within the same text. In this regard, three levels of relationships between signifier (form) and signified (content) can be distinguished: time relationships, spatial relationships and conceptual relationships. 2. : The relationship between the elements that sit in each other’s place and therefore, to produce other words, are in contrast with one another. In other words, associations are related to signifiers (forms) that are absent in the text. Both of the relationships are present in cinema and animation that should be read as a text (Asna Ashari, 2006).

Some other important elements can be seen in animation regarding signifier (form) and signified (content) such as code, icon, metaphor, symbol, and sign. In Daniel Chandler’s book regarding semiology, he has categories about symbol that can be seen in animation:

1. Social code such as “video graphic” that is related to the audience’s culture.
 - (a) Spoken language (Mata language, terminology)
 - (B) Physical coding (facial expressions, postures) (c) codes related to goods, fashion, clothing, machine
 - (d) codes of behavior (customs, traditions, rituals, games)
2. Textual codes
 - (A) Scientific code (a) mathematics (b) aesthetic codes in the areas of arts (poetry, drama, painting) including classicism, romanticism, realism, etc.
 - (B) Generic, rhetorical, and style codes including interpretation, argument, description, narration, etc.A: Mass media codes including the codes of photography, television, film, radio and the press, etc. which are both technical and contractual.

2. *Interpretative Code*: (a) conceptual codes (b) ideological codes including codes to encrypt and decrypt texts (Chandler, 2008).

Symbol: In the symbol, the relationship between form (signifier) and meaning (signified) is neither based on an objective similarity, nor proximity not essential, but is spontaneous. Example: Cross symbol is important as its dependence on historical events and religious beliefs and stands for the most important beliefs of Christians (Ghadim Khani, 2002) symbol is also observed in color.

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Metaphor: In semiology, metaphor includes a content (signified) that, as a form (signified), works to refer to another different content or signified. A long road in a film refers to human life that has been used in animation frequently.

Symbol: Symbolic language has had an international and communal aspect for all humanity in all eras and different cultures. It is like myths in animation which is a symbol (Fruom, 1992).

Roland Barthes and Audience

Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Philip Vuler and even Kristeva who were influenced by him, was members of a circle named “Tel Quel”. It was one of the most prominent cultural and thought circles in 20th century. Roland Barthes was one of the most active and outstanding members of the group. His theories have features that give them a special originality. According to Barthes, whenever audience is affected by a text, it means it is related to genealogy and its myth. He believes that human enjoys when he thinks of his kinship roots and ancestors which refers to kinship myths of genealogy and descendants. He believes that human has always enjoyed of seeing his roots in something. These myths have always been present in traditional societies. But Barthes is not agree with criticism and reading in a traditional way as he contends: “Traditional analysis was used to study the references of art and the effects of a work of art on the audience. Although this analysis has had a good time in scholarly institutions, it was being considered as a way of criticism. He, in his novel theory, reverberates this point of view.” Based on his and his colleagues’ attitude, it is not important what influence the artist accepts, but what he learns either unconscious or conscious. All of these effects and languages that pass through the work of art from artist is what he calls inter-textuality. He contends that content is not important but the form of work of art. He says it should be examined from the audience’s point of view as it is the audience that should get the applicable result of the art. That’s where Barthes values the audience more than the author. He states that if the audience’s view toward the work of art is compatible with formalist basics of it, his analysis can be considered as a work of art. He considers audience’s effects and dialects in particular, and creation of a new analysis of text a new creation and product. But this production has a group or theatrical identity; it is creativity and a group production. According to Barthes, the creator and author of the work of art remains the eternal owner of it, but the audiences turn it into an authoritative subject like simple consumers. He even thinks that the creator of the work of art has rights in respect to the audience. His work should have such content (signified) that can be exiting for the audience. So, creativity still is important about a work of art but he substitutes author with audience in being the core of creation. Roland Barthes believes that the problem with semiotics of motion picture lies in the fact that it is just one of the aspects that has been taken into consideration. It means, it is just the aesthetic part of it that has been analyzed and other aspects are neglected (Sakhi, 2010). From Barthes point of view, in animation pictures are multi-meaning and do not have only one meaning. This point can be very brightening for the wide range of connotations (Pin, 2000).

From Barthes’ point of view “all visual animation signs from a shot and a painting to a photo are digital signs until they are interpreted and then they are altered into deductive signs.” Take for example a cat that approaches a bowl of milk; if the bowl is empty it does not approach it. It alters a digital sign into a deductive one (Ahmadi, 1996). It is needed to say that Roland Barthes wrote his most appealing writings such as “the pleasure of the text” (1973), Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes (1974), and The lover’s word—a selection of phrases (1997) in the last decade of his life (Barthes, 1976).

Elements of Analysis in Animation

From Barthes’ point of view, our first encounter to signs in a film forms around its story and characterization. When a movie forms, it encompasses 7 systems. In fact, the story and the movie are like vessels that contain the systems:

1. Visual signs system: It is mostly related to the iconic signs.
2. The signs of movements system: It is more related to movements, intersection and montage in camera.
3. The system of linguistic signs of speech: It refers to the location of speech, language, langue, conversation and external interpretations in cinema.

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4. The system of linguistic signs of written words: It refers to the wide span of written words such as the title of the movie, subtitles, and internal signs in the structure of the movie.
5. Nonlinguistic vocal signs: This one refers to various forms of sound in the movie and natural sounds in it.
6. Musical signs system: It is related to the text music, music of the script, and any sort of music in the movie.
7. Story system: It includes the story line, the ways it goes on, genre, theme, climaxes, the way it uses myths and cultural issues. All of these signs can be divided into two categories: signs related to the animation technique, and signs related to visual and graphical elements. Film techniques include composition, montage, camera angle, tec. and graphic phenomena such as line, color, texture, tec. They are gathered in the below tables:

Table 1: Visual Sign Systems

Subsystems	Sign Systems
1.Color (pigments tome, the concentration of the color, contrast, darkness and brightness, the domineering color)	Visual
2.Texture (softness, roughness, tenderness, simplicity, variety visual interpretations of the texture)	
3.Form (the curves, jagged lines, soft lines with expressionist view toward film)	
4.Variety of gesture, the type of faces and character’s type(low man, tall man, fat, smiley, slim, sullen)	
5. Lightening (little light, local light, one side light, multi side light, up, down)	
6) Make-up (It has sort of decoding role in stop-motion film)	
7. Scene design and decoration(conscious location, unconscious location, empty scene, full scene)	
8.Customes (rich, poor, girl, boy, workers, foreman, etc)	
9. Composition (Symmetry, balance, imbalance, one-point and multi-points)	
10. Design technique, design line type (simple lines, childish lines, complex lines, lines with pensile, charcoal, ink, watercolor, design, style and coloring techniques, glove puppet, design with brush).	
11.Deviations and stylization (largeness and smallness of objects, perspective and magnitude derivations, simplification of human, plant and animal objects)	

Table 2: Movement Systems

Subsystems	Sign Systems
1.Shots(insert, extreme close-up, close up, medium long shot, Extreme long shot) Dissecting and timing (linear, nonlinear, parallel, the shot time length, the way shots are arranged)	Kinetic
Cut and movements rhythm (any picture’s speed, slow rhythm, swift rhythm)	
2. Montage	
3. Camera movements (Pan, zoom in, zoom out, etc)	
4.Camera angle (rear, face to face, next, profile, trilateral, up, down, down to top, top to down, the horizon angles)	
5.Shooting types (fast motion(low speed but swift movement), slow-motion (high speed of the camera with slow movement of the object)	
6. Special effects : surreal expression	
7.Tridimensional pictures (tridimensional show is not customary worldwide)	

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Table 3: Linguistic and Speech Systems

Subsystems		Sign Systems
The tone of speech (empathetic, threatening, begging, etc)	Dialogues and monologues The tone of dialogues	1. Tone Semiology of Speech
2. Internal dialogues (mental dialogues of characters with themselves- the sign of her/his thinking)		
3. Narration (Narrator's and the storyteller's voice)		
4. Oriental title-making(a titles that is stated via human natural voice)		

Table 4: Written Linguistic System

	Subsystems	Sign Systems
Graphic logo, name titles, written language of horror movies, comedy, crime, drama, historical, etc)	1. The works logo	Written linguistic signs
The beginning of the movie, direct expression of the theme, Genre, the story of every subject, an abstract of the movie	2. Title	
The written texts on a shot, place written signs, time written signs, boards, newspapers, journals, city boards, letters, notes	3. Subtitles and other written explanations	
At the end, the movie should be attractive enough to be followed by the audience	Ending titles	

Table 5: Non-Linguistic Vocal System

Subsystems		Sign Systems
All inside and outside sounds, door sound, train sounds, rain sound, animals, typhoons, etc.	Inside and outside of scene sounds	Vocal non-linguistic

Table 6: Musical System

Subsystem		Sign System
Music of title	Musical text	Musical
The music inside shots and scenes and the music for overlapping	Any sort of music in the movie	
It is sang by a subject or the actress/actor	singings	

Table 7: Story System of Animation Movie

Subsystems	Sign System
Any title the movie has including the meaning and the subject	1. Title
Love theme, family, political, ...	2. Theme
There are a large number of themes, more than genres.	
General and multi-linear subject of the movie	3. Subject
Movie category- crime, noir, musical, western- is general. The number of themes is less than genres.	4. genre
Climax or climaxes	5. Story line and climaxes
Such as fairy character named A who is male in Europe and female in the east. Bote Jegghe that is Iranian.	6. Culture and myth
The location where events take place	7. Location
Space crafts as a sign of future. Animations are for the most part mileless like “Father and daughter”	8. Time position
Social status of characters and their career in the story of . animation	9. Characterization

Conclusion

Surreal ideas frequent in animation structures. Being known as one of the most popular areas i.e. in direct relationship with people, animation is one of the most appealing and applicable art grounds for the study of different types of semiology. We would have creative works of art only when we have alert and knowledgeable audiences and critiques. Such critiques’ text can be considered as a work of art and improve animations. In previous analyses, complex and attractive parts of animation were used to be neglected. By expanding the science of linguistics and semiology via his critiques, Roland Barthes theories were a milestone in animation analysis and criticism. As he emphasized on the audience, he can be considered as the main person in the expansion of signs in depth of the film. It was where he stated the author’s death theory. He was considering photography and motion picture full of iconic signs. Animation, also, includes the three sign types of iconic, symbolic and indexical. As pierce says, anything that contains all three types of signs has the complete kinds. Hence, animation is a favorable field for the study of semiology. The result is a method that is against old analytical methods that were used to take only aesthetic aspect of the movie into account and neglect other aspects. According to Barthes, the first encounter to signs in a motion picture is its story and characterization and there are 7 systems when a film formed. In fact, the story of the movie is the vessel inside which the 7 systems are located:
 1. Visual sign systems, 2. Kinetic signs systems, 3. speech-linguistic sign systems, 4. Written-linguistic sign systems, 5. non-linguistic vocal sign systems, 6. Musical sign systems, and 7. Story sign systems.

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