

Analysis metaphors in animation: Plant

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Abstract

How can you understand the thinking behind a work of art through a small element? In this critical report, I would like to talk about metaphors in animation about plants and the role of the plant metaphor in animation.

The study was inspired by the artwork *Tree of life*, which is created by four artists: Adelino Serafim Maté, Fiel dos Santos, Hilario Nhatugueja and Christavao Canhavato. The *Tree of life* metaphors Africa's vibrant inventiveness. In this work, the artist transforms arms into tools and forms them into a large tree. The tree is a metaphor for growth and vitality to express productivity development.

In this article, I want to explore the potential of metaphors to build narratives in viewers' minds and the openness of metaphors. My purpose is to demonstrate the vital role of metaphors in the structure of narratives, and three discussions dominate the discussion of metaphors.

Keywords

Metaphors, Animation, Symbolism

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Introduction

Metaphors are usually characterised by several features guiding the exploration of narratives:

openness, anomaly, interaction and comparison.

For openness, We can fill in the blanks on our own since we are aware of the type of event that is intended or is likely to occur. The symbolic element of a plant draws the viewer into a larger narrative space and stimulates the viewer's imagination. In a movie, what isn't mentioned resonates more and offers the spectator with more space for imagination.

Metaphor interaction produces a new understanding of the terms. When a metaphor is thrown, it tends to get a reverse effect. The interaction here refers not only to the interaction with the work but also with the audience. Such interactions will also generate different magnetic fields between other people and works. Because of the ambiguity of their meaning, metaphors are effective tools for expressing thought, judgement, and explanation.

The metaphor implies an anomaly that is not in accordance with the laws of natural growth and the common perception of things. Personification in metaphor, for instance. The literary technique of personification has long been popular, especially in lyric poetry. The personified daffodils in the poem below by Wordsworth illustrate what likely one of the most well-known examples of this kind of metaphor is:

‘Ten thousand saw I at a glance

Tossing their heads in sprightly dance’

(William Wordsworth 1807)

Finally, Metaphors compare things, with the similarities between the terminology serving as the foundation for the comparison. Comparing one thing to another is a comparison of A and B in common or the same kind. It is a comparison with the same characteristics.

Literature Review

Metaphor as a narrative strategy is regularly found in different art forms. Paul Wells explained it greatly in his book *Understanding animation*. This book is the basic reference of this research and support.

In any aesthetic system, symbolism complicates the narrative structure, as a symbol may be consciously used as part of the vocabulary of an image to suggest a particular meaning, but equally, a symbol may be used unconsciously and, therefore may be taken to imply something beyond the artist's apparent intentions.

Metaphor develops from symbolism and is used to embody a system or idea within a more attractive or favourable system of images. The use of metaphor simultaneously gives rise to interpretation but insists on openness. In other words, an animated film can be explained by its symbolism, whether or not these symbols are deliberately used to promote meaning.

It serves to embody a system or idea in a more appealing and favourable system of images. As an interpretation of things, metaphor adheres to the principle of openness and offers more scope for imagination.

Chapter 1: *Coco*(2017 film) and How plant metaphors are created

When a plant is used as a symbol, it is frequently necessary to analyse its colour, fragrance and appearance to understand what it symbolises and what it can be used for. In the realm of philosophy, Theophrastus sees plants as creatures with a will, a mind and an intention, clearly indicating their autonomy and purpose in life. Flowers help people to convey their feelings and are often used for festivals and significant anniversaries. Flowers, with their specificity of having a flowering period, symbolise the impermanence and fragility of life, foreshadowing its brevity and periodicity. Birth, old age, sickness and death are all part of life, and there is no difference between people and plants in a sense. Using the petals as a blessing and a link to the real world. Metaphors exist in stories that the film uses the marigold as a symbol and the relationship between festivity and kinship as its primary metaphor. Marigolds are capable of suggesting the atmosphere created by recalling a particular occasion in a particular spirit or mood. In traditional Mexican rituals, the marigold is a medium for expressing the memory of a deceased relative, symbolising kinship and family unity, the release of the past and the desire for a better life in the future. The real death is that no one in the world remember you.

Chapter 2: *Coco*(2017 film) and Day of the Dead

The animation *Coco* depicts the traditional Mexican festival of the Day of the Dead. The Day of the Dead is both a celebration of life and a memorial to departed loved ones. Altars are placed in homes and public spaces to display the favourite foods, drinks and personal mementoes of those who have passed away. The Day of the Dead altars are decorated with hand-cut paper cempasuchitl or fresh cempasuchitl, as well as sugar skulls, and other items are used to decorate the graves and offerings.

There are more impressive ways of depicting the Day of the Dead in the film *Coco*, which divides the addresses of the dead and the living into two areas. In the movie, getting from the land of the dead to the land of the living entails going through the immigration process. The deceased must appear before an officer who searches a computer for their photograph. If your picture isn't on the altar, it implies that your loved ones no longer remember you and you won't be allowed to enter the realm of the living.

The movie *Coco* designed such a dramatic episode to let people have a deeper understanding of the customs of the Day of the Dead



Fig.1 Screen Grab from *Coco* (2017)

Chapter 3: *Coco* (2017 film) and 'Cempaspuchitl'

This chapter uses the Cempaspuchitl as a narrative symbol to explore the metaphor in the animation *Coco*. As a metaphor for missing and hoping for the best, the Cempaspuchitl serves to heal the soul by allowing people to experience that even loved ones from the past are there for us in a different way.

Cempasuchitl is the name of the Mexican marigold flower (*Tagetes erecta*). The word "Cempasuchitl" comes from the Nahuatl (Aztec language) Zempoalxochitl, which means twenty flowers: Zempoal means "twenty" and Xochitl means "flower". In this case, used to mean innumerable, so the real meaning of the name is "flower of many petals". They play a significant role and blossom near the conclusion of the rainy season in Mexico, just in time for the Day of the Dead. People compare the marigold to the sun because of its vibrant colour, which is bright orange or yellow. In Aztec mythology, the sun guided souls to the underworld. In the film *Coco*, the bridge covered with marigold petals is the way home for the dead souls.

One example of interaction is transforming the sensual language of the elements for symbolic purposes. The leaves of the marigold have a strong scent. The intense fragrance attracts people, and the scent predicts that at this time of year, the spirits of the dead will visit their relatives, helping them to find their way through the fragrance. Sometimes the petals are plucked out and used for elaborate designs or placed on the floor in front of the altar to mark a path for the spirits. Similarly, burning incense was thought to help lead the spirits. The marigold becomes an indicator in the scene when the petals dance as the protagonist plays his guitar.

A line in the film *Coco* said: To never forget how much your family loves you. The marigold gives full play to interactivity as a tool to convey blessings. In the film *Coco*, the young boy mistakenly enters the underworld and needs his outdated relatives to hold the marigold and send him blessings before he can return to the real world. The interaction between the characters and the metaphor

implies the blessings of their relatives in the heavenly realm. But the metaphor still has a sense of boundaries and ambiguity. The meaning is that despite the metaphors' seeming concreteness and vividness, there is less clarity in the communication between the author and the reader.

The characteristics of metaphor make it more touching to convey emotion and express it in a more poetic way. But sometimes, it may not be understood by everyone. This is the negative of metaphor, not like data or polarizing right and wrong. People may not be able to receive it immediately, or the meaning they understand is different from what the author wants to express, and the judgment of the quality of a metaphor will also produce different results according to the feelings of different people.



Fig.2 Screen Grab from *Coco* (2017)

Conclusion

The exploration of metaphor and the concept of metaphor itself can help us understand it and use it in a way that conveys a message. The openness of metaphor allows for more scope for imagination in terms of narrative structure. Through the method of metaphors, people can understand things differently and better represent the multifaceted nature of things.

Metaphor is the core of animation. When we watch an animation, we see not only the style and the production but also the part of the work that wants to be expressed and thought-provoking, in which metaphor plays a considerable role. Metaphor gives a deeper insight into things by transforming elements. More importantly, when we want to make a personal point, we can also look for an element to use as a metaphorical vehicle. In creation, the adept use of metaphor can make a difference. As a student of Visual Effects, I would like to use metaphors in the creation process of digital art so that my works are not only technical and aesthetic but also have more stories and metaphors.

The Day of the Dead celebration with warm yellow marigolds blooming in the autumn of November. The film *Coco* conveys that death is not the end of life and that memories are inseparably connected.

Words: 1603

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Fig.2 *Coco*(2017). (n.d.). [Online image] Available at: <http://www.padrestefanoliberti.com/2018/03/coco-presto-in-dvd-e-gli-spunti-di.html>.