

# Artistic Characteristics and Spiritual Core of Hayao Miyazaki's Animation Film Creation

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**Abstract:** In recent years, with the rapid development of economy and society and the constant change of people's spiritual needs, the market demand for animation movies is increasing, and animation movies occupy an important position in cinema screens. At the same time, the animation industry is playing an increasingly important role in the cultural and economic development. Audiences have different understandings of animated film art. Animated film carries out cultural communication and ideological expression through unlimited imagination. Miyazaki Hayao's animated film is a typical representative. Hayao Miyazaki integrates national culture into animation, uses superb production technology and unique creativity to create one wonderful animation film after another, and expects to understand Japanese culture and spirit through the audience's viewing of its animation film. In this context, this paper lists the artistic characteristics of Hayao Miyazaki's animated film creation, and analyzes its spiritual core from the artistic characteristics, in order to bring inspiration to the creation of animated films and promote the progress of animated films.

## 1. Research Background

### 1.1 Literature review

Lumingxia scholars excavated the spiritual core of "Material Sadness" from Miyazaki Hayao's animation, believing that Material Sadness Complex, as a Japanese native culture, would have a certain impact on Chinese culture (Lv, 2016). Meng Guiying and Yang Anyu summarized four reasons for Miyazaki Hayao's animation success. First, superb production technology. Second, get close to life. Third, unique creativity. Fourthly, it shows the cultural spirit (Meng and Yang, 2012). Zhou Fang scholars focus on the music in Miyazaki Hayao's animation movies. She proposes to understand the theme of animation movies from music. One of the charms of Miyazaki Hayao's animation movies is in music (Zhou, 2015). Wang Shiyang, a scholar, started with aesthetic characteristics, analyzed Hayao Miyazaki's animation films and TV works. He said that aesthetics played an important role in the development of animation (Wang, 2014). Li Ying, a scholar, interprets Miyazaki Hayao's representative works in order to analyze the mystery of the combination of culture and animation (Li, 2014). Yu Miao scholars deeply analyze the tragic theme in Miyazaki Hayao's animated films, which is one of the main characteristics of Miyazaki Hayao's creation. A thorough study of it can provide inspiration for the creation of animated films (Yu, 2015). Wang Jing studied the basic features of Miyazaki Hayao's animated film audio-visual language, and said that Miyazaki Hayao's animated film so deeply rooted in the hearts of the people and its excellent expression of audio-visual language is inseparable from the relationship (Wang, 2014). Zhang Yingying, a scholar, probes into the characterization of Hayao Miyazaki's animated films, and studies the reasons why Hayao Miyazaki's works are unique and popular with people of different ages (Zhang, 2018).

### 1.2 Purpose of research

Miyazaki Hayao's animated movies are well-known in the world, and I am also known as Kurosawa Ming in Japanese animated movies. In addition to the selection of themes and production techniques, his animated movies have their own culture which is an important feature to attract the

world's attention. Miyazaki's works are mostly rational thinking under perception. Many scholars have studied Miyazaki Hayao's animated movies, but the research only stays in the plot and characterization. The research is more one-sided, and the deep meaning of the story is not summarized. Hayao Miyazaki himself hopes that through his animated film works, he can understand its profound implications and realize the theme expressed in the animated film works. Through the artistic characteristics of Hayao Miyazaki's animated film creation, the author analyses its spiritual core in order to bring creative inspiration to the animated film market and promote the progress of animated film.

## **2. Current Development of Hayao Miyazaki's Animation Film Creation**

From the “Junior Ninja” in 1964, Miyazaki's life animated film officially set sail. As of 2015, Master Hayao Miyazaki has created countless excellent animated film works. Among them are the “Spirited Away”, “City of the Sky”, “Princess Mononoke”, “The Valley of the Wind”, “My Neighbor Totoro”, “Red Pig” and so on. These works have won numerous awards in the world and are well received. Master Hayao Miyazaki quoted Japan's unique social and cultural background to create his own unique and unique animation style. In this context, the theme of his animated film works is quite profound. Miyazaki's animated films mostly reveal the relationship between man and nature and the expression of pacifism, as well as the feminist movement. Its animated film leads the entire Asian animated film style. These films have moving storylines and romantic styles. Miyazaki's strong imagination shows people a magical and wonderful world. On February 27, 2017, Miyazaki revealed in the NHK special program “Miyazaki Hayao that never ends” that the new long animation works are in production and will be made public in 2019. Japanese animation was originally influenced by the handcrafts and has not been innovative for many years. Since Miyazaki began, he raised the animation to the height of humanity, and was also the spiritual pillar of the three generations of Japanese animators. His own determined qualities and struggles for animated films have set an excellent example for animators around the world.

## **3. Artistic Characteristics of Hayao Miyazaki's Animation Film Creation**

### **3.1 Dreaming theme**

Hayao Miyazaki said this when he created his “Ghibli” studio. The beauty of dreams can only be manifested when they are young. It is not difficult to find that most of Miyazaki's animated films are built around flying. All children think that they can fly in the sky when they are young, so Miyazaki is also a flying theme or a flying scene. Modern people are bound and suppressed in life, and flying can bring a sense of relief to the audience and release their souls. People stand on the ground, and they only see the trunk. But when you fly in the sky, you see the canopy. Hayao Miyazaki's works “My Neighbor Totoro” and “The Valley of the Wind” are all ending with the free flying of the last protagonist. This is also the yearning for Miyazaki's dream of turning into a dream of childhood. Hayao Miyazaki created an animated film with a childlike heart, and the theme of his dreams resonated with people.

### **3.2 Popular aesthetics**

Most movie audiences pay little attention to the deep meaning behind the film. Therefore, most animated movies can be called a top movies as long as they are liked by most audiences. The same is true of Miyazaki's films. However, when Miyazaki created animated films, he would not only consider whether it conforms to the popular aesthetic, but also pay more attention to the psychological appeal of the audience in a general sense. To meet the needs of the audience of animated movies, Miyazaki's animated movies are not only for children to see joy, but also for adults to read love and justice. Nowadays, fast food culture is popular. Hayao Miyazaki also describes animated movies as fast food culture. But when he created it, he was never perfunctory to the public. He always knew what the public needed. He wanted to convey more things through animated movies, such as truth, kindness and beauty. Therefore, Miyazaki Hayao's animated films

have always focused on the spiritual world, and therefore all his works are full of vitality.

### **3.3 Image of girls**

Hayao Miyazaki is a Japanese master, and the girl element has always occupied a primacy in Japanese comic culture. Because most girls are pure and lovely, their image will cause the audience to resonate emotionally. However, it is different from the image of a girl in Japanese manga. They are not only cute and pitiful. These girls are simple and stubborn, brave enough to face suffering, and never give up. The brave Anna in “Red-haired Girl Anna”, Qi Qi in the “Women's House”, and so on. They look ordinary, but they touch the hearts of the viewers with their cheerful personality and inner goodness. They also passively accept help to reverse and become heroes and win respect. In a certain sense, the status of traditional women has changed and made major breakthroughs. The girl animation in Miyazaki's works is very ideological, which is one of the reasons why many Hayao Miyazaki fans love him so much.

### **3.4 Humanitarian connotation**

One of the reasons why Miyazaki's work has always been praised is that the work is full of humanitarianism. This has a lot to do with Miyazaki's childhood in World War II. Therefore, most of Hayao Miyazaki's works are created at the point of eco-humanism, and Miyazaki also has a high reputation internationally. After reading Hayao Miyazaki's animated film work, you will know that Hayao Miyazaki's work has always focused on people and nature, feminist issues and peace issues. The flames of war in his work “The City of the Sky” sparked people's thinking about peace. The fierce conflict between man and nature in Princess Mononoke. The kind and brave girl in Spirited Away seeks to save her parents. Hayao Miyazaki never deliberately rendered the suffering of war, but still let the movie audience feel the sadness and pain brought by the war. Behind the animated film works is Hayao Miyazaki's deep thinking on humanitarianism, and hopes that the film audience will lead people to think when watching the movie.

## **4. the spiritual core analysis of Hayao Miyazaki's animated film from the perspective of artistic characteristics**

### **4.1 The innocence and beauty of childhood**

Many adult audiences who have watched Miyazaki's works will say that Miyazaki's animated movies are not just for children. Because many viewers will think of their childhood when they look at his works. Childhood symbolizes innocence and carefree. Hayao Miyazaki once said that his works are intended to arouse adults' thinking about whether the children of today have lost a lot of things. Hayao Miyazaki hopes that children's childhood will be colorful and free. Hayao Miyazaki stood in the perspective of children to create, find what the children lost, from their own animated movies to show the way forward for the children, so that they have their own ideas, independent, strong will, the master's conscience can be seen in general.

### **4.2 Close to life**

Hayao Miyazaki's works have many war scenes, and some viewers say it's not good for children. But Hayao Miyazaki lived in war in his childhood. He has experienced many things and seen many warm and selfish people. War exists forever, and it is an important factor in the continuous progress of the historical rings. Hayao Miyazaki hopes that those who see his works in peace times can fully understand that the world is not only beautiful, but also hides many terrible things. Every time the just side wins, we will applaud it. Such an outcome is also to publicize Miyazaki's anti-war ideas and his yearning for peace. Although this kind of creation has a heavy feeling in a certain sense, the happy ending always fills people with strength and warmth.

### **4.3 Romanticism**

According to the character characteristics, Hayao Miyazaki likes to use teenage girls as the main characters. The tone of the film is mostly blue sky, white clouds, breeze and vast ocean. Hayao

Miyazaki insisted on hand-drawn animation in his composition, describing the world through simple and romantic single-line composition. Choosing fresh color avoids the strong color in traditional western animation. Through the perfect combination of light, shadow and color, every frame of the film always reflects Romanticism and gives the audience a unique emotional experience. Hayao Miyazaki likes to use romance to express specific scenes, but also likes to use romance to portray and shape the characters in the film. However, the contemporary thinking and social reflection under the imagery of Romanticism are the most desirable expressions of Hayao Miyazaki. His Romanticism contrasts sharply with the ugly reality, which has caused people to think deeply again and again.

#### **4.4 Ecological humanism**

Hayao Miyazaki's works have always had an eternal background, that is, ecological humanities. Hayao Miyazaki does not think that absolute nature is the best, nor does he blindly criticize modern industry. He believes that it is best to reconcile the contradictions between nature and modern industry. The pursuit of natural integrity will stop human society, and the pursuit of industrial progress will destroy nature. Therefore, Miyazaki Hayao's works depict the highly developed human industry, as well as the scarred natural environment in this context. But in the ending of Princess Ghost, Miyazaki's expectation of the conflict between modern industry and nature is embodied. Finally, the protagonist saved the human beings and saved the nature. Hayao Miyazaki expressed his strong desire for the harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature, which was based on the ecological humanism derived from human industry and natural environment.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Miyazaki Hayao's animated movies are famous all over the world. He has made great contributions to the development of animated films. His works have their own unique style in characterization, scene creation, music coordination and so on. Watching its animated movies triggers the thinking of human nature, the love of nature and the exploration of humanism. Its animation creation has great influence on people. Starting from the artistic characteristics, this paper studies its dream theme, popular aesthetics, image of young girls and humanitarian connotation, and summarizes the spiritual core of childhood innocence, close to life, Romanticism and ecological humanism. In order to promote the progress of animation works.

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