



REVISITING THE ROLE OF COLOURS IN ANIMATED CHARACTERS: A PSYCHOANALYTICAL APPROACH

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Abstract: Colour is everywhere and the advancement of technology makes the colour more communicating. In animated characters, there is plenty of figures which are rich and creating a symbolic significance too. These colours hit the psychology of the human mind in many ways. The colour is communicating the idea of the individuals and creating a bridge between the spectators and the creator. The electronic and social media is making a mark in the minds of the individuals and colour is the utmost part of it. In the recent age, the animated characters are full of life and keep an important place in the minds of the movie lovers. These characters have so many things and the creative process also has a variety of approaches. These approaches include drawing, animation and colours. The characters do not have value without the application of colours and sometimes it is very important to use colour to narrate the idea behind the creation of the characters. The paper aims to discuss the application of colours in some animated characters which have been created with 3D animation. The animated characters which are connecting the thread of multimedia and animation industry have a different approach to the psychology of the spectators.

Keywords - 3D Animation, Animated characters, Symbolic significance of colours, Animation and colours

I. INTRODUCTION

The field of animation is an exploration of multiple figures in the form of moving images. The computer-generated imagery (CGI) has given multiple opportunities to the animators which are opening new doors for further exploration. The advancement of the digital age is surrounded by these creative animation effects. The colour application is also a very important part in the creation of such images, videos, characters etc. colour is connected with the psyche of the human mind and give a never-ending memory to any of the object or idea. The human mind is very associated with particular experience with almost all of the colours. A consecutive approach can also be seen in the computer-generated movies in respect of colours and its symbolism.

The animated characters cannot be imagined without the application of colours. The symbolism of colours making the characters strong and astonishing. In movies, the 3D animation entered in 1995 with the movie Toy Story directed by John Lasseter.

Though this practice was already there in the form of short movies, Television commercials, computer games but the movie toy story was the first revolutionary movie which is known as the full-length computer-animated movie. From this revolution, there are so many stones which turned by the film industry in the form of animated characters and videos with the collaboration of the animated industry. The advance motion capturing and hyper-realistic images have been captured through the computer process. In recent trends, we can see the famous TV series Game of Thrones by George R.R. Martin and Avatar movie by James Cameron and many more to credit in the same line. The cartoon characters are everywhere which is in the lead of winning the heart of children and adult as well. The popularization of these characters are also allowing commercialization in term of utility objects and we can see the objects in the market having the impression of these animated characters of movies and TV series. After the success of the movie, video games have also been created so that people can have a lively experience with their favourite characters. The animated movie Aladdin did a business of over 495 million dollars which was a huge success of American animated industry. As quoted by Sekeroglu, "the American animated movie Aladdin grossed over 495 million dollars worldwide and represented the success of the American animation industry, which then led to an expansion into animated movies which targeted adults" (2012).

The colour is the major part of these characters, the colours have been chosen particularly to establish a symbolic significance in the mind-set of the people or consumers/spectators. The spectators can be charmed by the unique processes of applying colour with the help of software in computer animation process.

II. ANIMATION AND ITS CLASSIFICATION

- 2.1 Traditional Animation:** The traditional process of animation is also known as cel animation and used to be based on hand-drawn images. The traditional animators used to spend multiple hours in making thousands of images on a special paper for the photography of the same after joining the frames. Companies like Disney were involved in doing such kind of practices. The signature 'watercolour' effect of Disney animated film can be easily identified with its multiple layers in the background (Thomas & Johnson, 1995).
- 2.2 2D Animation (vector-based):** This animation process is entirely based on Vector and being created in Adobe Animate CC where key frames have been identified with a nominal amount.
- 2.3 Stop Motion:** In this process, the same traditional process of animation is followed but on the place of drawing, the clay models are used in a particular set. Multiple media can be used to take models like figures, puppets, silhouettes, cut-outs, Pixilation (using real people and original environment for creating video), etc. The movie Kubo and the Two Strings can be taken as an instance of stop motion animation because it has a diverse approach. Most of the part of stop motion has already been taken by 3D animation and computer graphics but some are still in love with this process because of its different projection. The visual effects can be created in more unique ways with this unique form of animation but his process is again very time taking and rigorous.
- 2.4 Motion Graphics:** This technique involves the usage of graphic elements like logos, text etc. and used in multimedia projects

III. 3D ANIMATION

It is the most popular form of animation because of its popularity in characters, movies, video games and social media. It is a rigorous process which needs a group of professional to frame the outcome of the design. A digital puppet is used for the generation of the character in 3D animation, followed by a skeleton that gives the flexibility to the animator for movement. The digitally sharpened model can give the desired outcome in the context of character making. The certain key frames have been posed for the calculation and performance of the program. After this modelling process, the rendering of multiple frames has been done as per the desired image outcome. The parts and images are handled by the animator to give a perfect shape and curve to the image/characters. All the parts of the created subject are always there whether in function or not. The advancement of computers in animation was an achievement for the betterment of resolution, for example, we can see the movie 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarves' (1993) which was restored entirely with high resolution (Bordwell, 2012).

IV. COLOUR AND ANIMATION

The symbolic significance of colour can be seen everywhere whether it is visual art or animation. Colour is the most important part of any of the animated characters because the audience or spectators always have an emotional connection with colors. The color is simply a value of light and without light, it has no existence. The colour works as per its wavelength and the after-effects on the retina but apart from the scientific process, colours hit the soul of human beings. The application of colour is very easy as per the advancement of technology.

Animators have all the freedom to change the colour of particular characters with the help of techniques and tools. On the other hand, the usages of colour in a particular character or as per the demand of the theme is a very challenging task. The animator usually creates an unreal world through animation in the movie but this unreal world should have some organic value too so that the spectators can feel connected to the movie or characters. The computer animation was a big achievement in the field of animation because it helped the animator to correct colour in the whole frame after selecting individual objects and the animator does not need to bother for the combined alteration like earlier (Prince, 2012).

We can take the example of the movie Despicable Me and their cute and funny minions by the company Illumination Entertainment. The yellow colour of their body gives us a gesture of joy and happiness. Their love and fondness of banana are unforgettable. The curious and urgent desire of banana of minions can be seen in their body colour and shape. It sometimes looks like they generated from the concept of banana and yellow is the colour of the banana itself.

So, the colour is taken by the artist to relate their situation and love with the physical appearance of the banana. It is stated that "The Minions are the best and worst things about kids, painted in the brightest colours: They're pure id, and they're also pure joy. They're prone to distraction, but they're unceasingly devoted. They can be selfish, but also willing to work together toward a common goal. They're hilarious, infuriating, and wonderful all at once, just like kids" (Edwards 2015). As per this description, it is noted that apart from all other activities, their bright colours are also helpful to create the likeliness of the people towards minions.

V. THE MYSTERY OF THE MINION YELLOW

The colour of the minion body showcased a very different tone of yellow which is created especially of the wonderful minions. The minion yellow has been created by Pantone colour institute to "heighten awareness and create clarity, lighting the way to the intelligence, originality and the resourcefulness of an open mind" (Wainwright, 2015). If we talk about the colour only, it is a simple accomplishment of joy and happiness in the form of minions. The body of minions has the colour of Joy because the colour stands for 'playful and happy stimulating quality' (Clarke & Costall, 2008). The yellow colour is warm and represents energy, sunshine, hope, aggressiveness, eagerness, enthusiasm, and many more similar term which is much related to the minions. The colour is the overall representative of the minions and no colour can give such kind of justice which did the minion yellow. The colour is also meant for the unisex approach as it does not have a pink and blue tone which is usually approached in terms of gender significance. Even the love of banana can also be seen in almost all age groups and the fans of minions come from all age groups. It can also be considered that the minion yellow is created to assure safety because in a study the colour yellow has been evaluated in terms of a taxi driver and road accidents (Kesong & Anderson 2019). The minions are shown ready and alert with their boss to fight with any situation. So maybe this colour was the symbol of safety too.

The aesthetical approach which has been created by the colour is indirectly hitting the mind of the spectators, is symbolically approaching the groups to imagine the childish world with the mischievous activity of the minions.



Fig.1 & 2: Minion Image

Fig.1 Source: <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/530439662335751545/>

Fig.2 Source: https://www.pngitem.com/middle/JTmmxT_single-minion-png-high-quality-image-stuart-minion/

VI. THE DIVINE COLOUR SCHEME IN TANGLED MOVIE

Another example can be taken from the movie taken and focusing on the main character named Rapunzel's golden hair and violet dress always give us an impression of the joyful and mesmerizing character. The golden hairs are related with the shiny light and bliss which Repunzel has got with the help of the golden flower which is magical and has healing power. The royalty of the leading character has been shown with the application of the violet colour and the heroic character of the young princess Rapunzel is so impressive and magnificent. Even the entire movie has a personification of colour in all the aspects.

Rapunzel, a girl with an adventurous persona and ambitious personality, explored his dream in the movie after meeting his parents as she was not allowed to go outside. Her stepmother is cunning and selfish and using her to remain young forever with Rapunzel's magical hairs. The colour purple is doing justice with the storyline and the character and giving a symbolic impression of the royal and adventures life of Rapunzel. The colour also represents the feeling of love and romance. Thus it creates an attachment of the spectators towards the character.



Fig.3 Rapunzel of Tangled Movie

Fig.3 Source: <https://www.wallpaperflare.com/search?wallpaper=tangled>

VII. THE AVATAR MOVIE AND THE SUBLIME COLOUR SCHEME

The American Science fiction, Avatar has the natural colour scheme with magic- realism in the application of colours. Jack, who explored the extra-ordinary world of Pandora. The place is a very rich source of all the natural things which is needed for the flourishing of the earth and nature. This project is based on a marine who became a medium to communicate with the residents of Pandora, which somewhere exist on the moon. The colour of their bodies is striped blue which resembles water and earth. The colour blue was not the only choice as green was also considered for the colour of the body but the blue was finalized due to some reasons.



Fig.4 The poster of Avatar Movie with its Main Cast

Fig.4 Source:<https://in.pinterest.com/pin/660269995347292109/>

As stated by the director in an interview that “we were down to blue and green basically –and green had been taken by all those Martian movies with the little green men.... So we have big blue women, not the little green men” (Carroll 2009).

Blue is the personification of life because it represents water and without water, there will be no survival on earth. The character has been shown as romancing with nature in multiple landscapes which seems surreal sometimes. The colour also gives a cooling effect which is the spirit of Pandora. The blue body also creates an otherness because on earth no human body exists with blue colour, so spectator somehow feels surprised and attached towards the characters. The dark blue strips on the bodies create an impression of the human-nature union as we can see shades of nature everywhere and blue consumes a huge part of it.

VIII. Conclusion

Going through the conclusion, it may be considered that colour is the utmost part of 3D animation or animated characters. The animator can fill life in the characters with the help of colours. The human mind is consciously or subconsciously connected the colours from the very childhood. Colours are the medium of day to day life, without colour we cannot identify the objects and the very first object which we identify became the representative of our expression. They build a strong impression in our minds. For instance, the colour red symbolizes fire, food, fruits and we feel attracted towards all the red things which we pursue in the form of red colour. It also connected with our blood, so it is pursued as the colour of life.

On the contrary, the yellow colour first denotes the sunshine and then energy because without the sun we cannot get light, cultivation and growth. In the absence of sunlight, life is very difficult so the characters like minion also symbolically represent the sunshine but in a very balanced way. The balance which is needed in all the natural elements like fire, earth, water and air. Subsequently, there are plenty of yellow eatables which formed a special place in our mind so whenever we see imagery or character, is also symbolically connected with our mind. We feel thrived by the ongoing character because of its emotional connect and psychological approach and sometimes we do not know it at all.

The colour blue, as discussed above, represents water and there are so many adventurous which are related to water. When we see a character in blue, most of the times it gives us an impression of a small droplet of water and sometimes it gives us the terror of the ocean. This duality of nature regarding any aspect create a fusion of diversity which is the most wonderful thing in the persuasion of any animated

characters. Whether we like or don't like the animated character but we feel alarmed or connected in a single sight, then the process of like or dislike can be considered or it takes shape into our mind.

The violet colour of Rapunzel also reminds us of royalty, love and passion and we feel impressed or excited to see the character. Like a fairytale, most of the people feel mesmerized with her golden hair and desire to fulfil the dream.

The animator can never go without the colour if he or she wants to create a deeper impression in the mind of the spectators. The creation of a character may look empty without the application of colour even the nature of the character can be easily defined with the help of a particular colour. The temperament of the character can also be narrated without any detail with the selection of appropriate colours like blue stands for cool temperament while yellow stands for warm temperament. Thus colour is the key to communicate with the audience to make them familiar with the animated characters. .

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