

The Application of Formal Beauty in the Artistic Design of Animation Scenes—Using *Legend of Deification* as an Example

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Abstract: Formal beauty is a kind of beauty without the help of experience and transcendence, and the creators of formal beauty can reproduce it through the use of formal rules. In the process of long-term practice, the rules of formal beauty have been summarized and abstracted, with many regular understandings coming into being, such as change and unity, rhythm and rhyme, balance and symmetry, hierarchy and harmony, etc.; hence a series of rules about formal beauty have been formed^[1]. This kind of transcendental beauty can reappeared through the arrangement of visual rules. In this paper, the animation film *Legend of Deification* which was adapted from the traditional Chinese myth novel *The Investiture of the Gods* and newly released in China, was used as an example to discuss and analyze the artistic design in its animation scenes.

Keywords: Formal beauty; Animation Scenes; Design

1. Change and Unity

Change reflects the diversity of things, while unity embodies the commonness and overall connection of them. The unity of change reflects the characteristics of objective things, that is, the law of opposites & unity. In the artistic design of animation scenes, the change of scene pictures must be highly unified, so that the scene pictures can have a unified central visual image style, in order to form an organic whole of formal beauty. Unity is the development of a symmetrical structure in form, transformed from the symmetry of shape to the symmetry of force and embodied in the appearance of "heteromorphic equivalent". The unified format of appearance is a relatively free form.

All things are subject to various changes, but they are also unified in a certain form of law. Change and unity are the unity of opposites of two aspects of the same thing, the fundamental law of the development of things, and the characteristics of all objective things. Change and unity are the general rules of art. They are on the one hand opposite to each other and on the other hand mutually dependent on each other.

In the scene design of the *Legend of Deification*, there were both changes and unity. The change and unity were applied to the design of the background. For example, Beihai, the place of exile, was out of order whereas Kunlun was a symbol of order and authority. In terms of artistic design, symmetrical design was used to reflect this aesthetic sense. Therefore, no matter in the composition of scene design or in the plane layout of Kunlun, change and unity were embodied in the film, in order to make a contrast between order and out of order.^[2]

In addition to the contrast between different scenes, the scene design also highlights the unity between scenes. It is a unity of the tone and the overall mood of the film. For instance, the tone of Beihai was mainly cool. In the later stage, the scene of Jiang Ziya's breaking Jacob's ladder is also in the cool tone. In the setting of scene props, the great differences formed a sharp contrast, but through the unity of tones, the functions of these scenes were unified in the narration of the film.

2. Symmetry and Balance

Symmetry in formal beauty mainly refers to the composition of the same or similar objects in the left and right or upper and lower positions of the same picture. The sense of balance generated by symmetry is a special visual sense. It is the development of a symmetrical structure in form, transformed from the

symmetry of shape to the symmetry of force and embodied in the appearance of "heteromorphic equivalent". The unified format of appearance is a relatively free form. Both visual balance and physical balance are a distribution state in which the objects in the scene stay in a pause state.

In the artistic scene design of the *Legend of Deification*, the scenes of Kunlun, Guixu and other sacred Taoist grounds were mostly symmetrical, while the scenes of the land of human desolation, such as Yudu mountain and Beihai, weakened the symmetry of the scene architectures, and used props to complete the balancing of pictures, so that the scenes looked more balanced and would not give people a sense of visual weightlessness.

3. Hierarchy and Harmony

Hierarchy is the emphasis of scene differences. The factors of picture contrast have the same or different natures. The two relative elements of a scene picture were contrasted with each other to produce a sharp contrast of big and small, light and shade, black and white, strength and weakness, crudeness or fineness, loose and solid, high and low, far and near, moving and quiet, and light and weight. The most basic element of scene contrast is to show the master-slave relationship and the effect of unified change. The harmony of scenes and pictures refers to the suitability, pleasantness, stability, and unity, etc., which is an emphasis of approximation. The two or more elements are in common. However, scene hierarchy and harmony are supplementary to each other.

Generally, in the composition and design of animation scenes, the whole should be reconciled and the parts should be contrasted. The contrast in animation art mainly refers to the contrast between people and things, between the quality and quantity of things or people, between colors in works, or between the proportion or hue of human and landscape. The sublimation of harmonious contrast is a way of artistic expression on the basis of contrast and a limited means of balancing visual effect and visual sense.

In the *Legend of Deification*, the scene of Jacob's ladder used blue and yellow to form a sharp contrast, highlighting the atmosphere of the overall scene, but it also presented color harmony, so that in addition to the special effects, yellow retained its original hue but also reduced the lightness and saturation, which was weaker than the special effects of yellow lightning, drawing the visual center attention to the special effect of yellow lightning. In the scene design, the sharpness of the lightning contrasted with the narrowness of Jacob's ladder, which delivered the audience a feeling that Jacob's ladder was crumbling, as if it would be split by lightning in the next second. In the scene of Kunlun, the demon chopping platform in the middle was a square cross, which formed a contrast with the circle of the surrounding altar, highlighting the master-slave relationship of the scene of Kunlun. However, the arrangement of the overall modeling also reflected the harmony of the scene design.

4. Rhythm and Rhyme

Rhythm and rhyme, which have always been used to describe music, are used here to describe the visual sense of animation scene design. To some extent, hearing and vision can be mutually converted, and the key link of conversion is the arrangement of virtual and real and loose and solid in the pictures, so that the quiet pictures produce visual movement in the design of animation scenes. A change with rhythm has the beauty of rhyme, which also reflects the order and sequence of the artistic composition. The scene arrangement in Beihai is not disorderly, but orderly and rhythmic on the basis of disorder. For example, in the scene design of Beihai, the visual center of the scene was an axe, and in front of the axe there was a land of snow. From the snow to the endless ocean, Jiang Ziya was fishing there. The arrangement of elements in the scene gave rhythm to the whole picture: from the axe with strong rhythm to the snow and sea with weak rhythm, to the fishing Jiang Ziya with medium rhythm, and then to the sea level with weak rhythm, which on the one hand added a sense of spatial hierarchy, giving the film more visual readability; and on the other hand, enabled the audience to understand the spatial characteristics of the character and focus more on the character itself. In the scene design of Jacob's ladder in the *Legend of Deification*, it is also through the rhythm and rhyme to form the artistic composition of the animation scenes. The virtual of cloud and the reality of Jacob's ladder incorporated rhythm into the scene and made the scene design more ingenious. Through this form of beauty, the scene looks more artistic.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, the beauty of form is a kind of beauty without the help of experience and transcendence. The creators use the rules of form to reproduce formal beauty, and use formal beauty to improve the aesthetic sense of design. It is a common subject for all design disciplines to explore the rules of formal beauty^[3]. Understanding the composition of formal beauty plays an important role in the application of formal beauty in the design of animation scenes.

References

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