Fiction and Reality in Animation: Taking *Final Flight of the Osiris* as an Example

Syong-Yang Chung, Xin-An Chen

Abstract—This study aims to explore the less well-known animation "Final Flight of the Osiris", consisting of an initial exploration of the film color, storyline, and the simulacrum meanings of the roles, which leads to a further exploration of the light-shadow contrast and the psychological images presented by the screen colors and the characters. The research is based on literature review, and all data was compiled for the analysis of the visual vocabulary evolution of the characters. In terms of the structure, the relational study of the animation and the historical background of that time came first, including The Wachowskis' and Andy Jones' impact towards the cinematographic version and the animation version of "The Matrix". Through literature review, the film color, the meaning and the relevant points were clarified. It was found in this research that "Final Flight of the Osiris" separates the realistic and virtual spaces by the changing the color tones; the "self" of the audience gradually dissolves into the "virtual" in the simulacra world, and the "Animatrix" has become a virtual field for the audience to understand itself about "existence" and "self".

Keywords—The Matrix, The Final Flight of Osiris, Wachowski sisters, simulacrum.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE shaping of the main characters is key to creating successful stories. To a certain extent, character-shaping in "The Matrix" has reached to an authentic and persuadable level as the names, place names, dialogues, and images that appear in the stories are mostly borrowed from the Bible, which makes the characters very metaphorical. "The Animatrix" is an extension of the movie version, "The Matrix"; it is the branch story with real persons that focuses on the portrait of the roles other than the main characters. It has vividly illustrated the secondary characters other than Neo when choosing to be loyal to themselves or to the matrix, and the different choices to be made. Neo is the hacker identity used in the matrix which means "innovation". In "The Matrix", The One refers to the savior, implying Messiah who creates the world for human beings. The animation is based on the movie "The Matrix" but also has independent animation stories produced by The Wachowskis. "The Animatrix" is divided into nine stories, like "The Final Flight of Osiris", "Second Renaissance Part I & II" and others. Each of them adds the different points of view in terms of the background, philosophy, theology, atheism and so on to the movie.

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II. WACHOWSKI SISTERS AND ANDY JONES

The Wachowskis are screenwriter sisters of "The Animatrix" with Andy Jones, the director of "Final Fantasy" as the director of the 9-minute-long animated short-film [10] "The Final Flight of Osiris", also known as the sequel of "The Matrix" as well as the key to connect "The Matrix" and "The Matrix Reloaded". The Wachowskis indicated: "the audience must watch this short film to be able to understand the crisis faced by the humans' last base – Zion." Each animation story of "The Matrix" is about 10 minutes, so it is not easy to explain everything in such a short time. [9] To achieve a sensational story, the author or the audience must use their imagination to connect the plot.

Jones, the director, explained: "When we were drawing 'The Final Flight of Osiris', the greatest advance of the computer animation technology that we used is that it can authentically present the expressions and the skin of the characters. When drawing 'Final Fantasy', we used clothing to cover the body of the characters, but in 'The Final Flight of Osiris', we must present the meticulous actions and changes of the skin, taking this animation technology to an unprecedented state." "The Final Flight of Osiris" has the most realistic pictures of the screen. In the lead roles, the face and the pores of the male and female protagonists are clearly visible. The Wachowskis said: "The reason why we used 3D animation was because we hoped the audience to believe "The Final Flight of Osiris" was a performance with real persons which could recall the audience's memory of 'The Matrix'".

III. COLOR CONVERSION

According to [7], colors can engrave the emotions and the impressions into our heart, affecting our spirit and state of mind. Thus, it can extend the storyline, getting involved directly with the atmosphere and the creation of the mood. In terms of the colors in this film, when Jue and Thadeus are situated in the virtual space, the overall effect of the picture is rich and colorful, showing the self-evident affection between each other. The colors are just enough to indicate that both of them are in the virtual space and just right to show their love. The inner messages and the fantasies emitted by the indulging lovers are usually expressed with rich colors at different level depending of their level of love. As we knew from "The Matrix", the power that Neo and others face was from Agent Smith, having his mission transformed into endless conflicts. In "The Final Flight of Osiris", the characters are facing the antagonism caused by the conflict between people and the matrix. During the journey when Zion's vessel Osiris tries to avoid the chasing of the matrix machines, the opening is also

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full of colors (00'17"- 02'53", Figs. 1 and 3), occupying about one fourth of the whole, using Jue and Thadeus's virtual battling to describe the affectionate relationship.

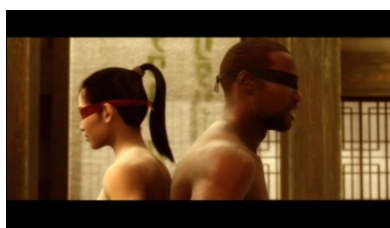Fig. 1 The opening is also full of colors

Fig. 2 Using Jue and Thadeus's virtual battling to describe the affectionate relationship
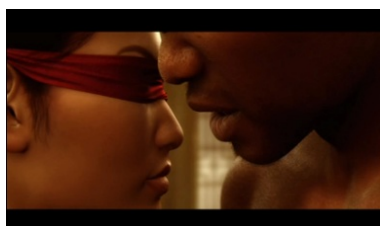

Fig. 3 Using Jue and Thadeus's virtual battling to describe the affectionate relationship

According to [8], the screen scenario used by Andy Jones in the film creates a particular aesthetic and filming angle for the characters and the story, narrating the space as a real "time and space" which allows a touching and psychological connotation. In the film, Osiris accidentally found out about a planned attack of the machines on Zion, and so the protagonist decides to warn Zion. In such critical moment, the two, who return to the real world, believe that both of them should face the enemy and complete the communication mission. In "The Animatrix", Jue re-enters the virtual space of the computer, making the film colorful again. When it is changed to the virtual space of the matrix, the colors are heavier, which outlines the opposition of "virtual" and "real". Thus, it is evident, the importance of the color conversion and the scenes between the dynamic images. The background color should match the plot and the psychological states and expressions of the characters.

In the film, the director uses warm color or cold colors to balance the theatrical content of the images or to achieve an artistic purpose. In "The Final Flight of Osiris", the real and the virtual are divided into two by changing the color tones, and color conversions represent a successful changing of emotion of scenario. When Jue and Thadeus leave the virtual space of the computer and the scene of the machine attacks (Fig. 4),

returning to the tranquility, the color tone changes to a color tone of dark gray and blue-purple, giving the audience a sense of disturbed negative emotions which can lead them to feel the real sense of crisis overall. The film uses "bright" and "dark" and "colorful" and "rustic" to represent the contrast of "virtual" and "real". The technique of "cross-cutting" intends to use the serial images for the discussion of the two parallel storylines at different points. The light and shadow can cleverly enhance the drama of the scenario, while the shadow presented by the characters and the background can bring out the faces of the characters and a small amount of bright colors in the background. Like the prosecutors (the machines) and the victims (the Osiris crew and Jue), the rapid cross-cutting may intensify the tension of the audience. The ensuing fate and urgency is portrayed by the subtle light, air and shadow that simulate the real visual and psychological features.

Fig. 4 Osiris accidentally found the attack of the machines to Zion

Fig. 5 The real and the virtual are divided into two by changing the color tones

Fig. 6 The color tone changes to a color tone of dark gray and blue-purple, giving the audience a sense of disturbed negative emotions

When Jue enters into the matrix (Fig. 7), she urgently wants to transmit the message to Zion. The rapid tempo accompanying the fast motions of the character as well as the weak light and shadow at certain parts of the image, give the audience an unknown disturbance and anxiety. At the last conflict in "The Final Flight of Osiris", human beings were defeated. Before Jue falls (Fig. 9), she struggles to put the mobile into the relay station – the e-mail (Fig. 8), creating a sense that Zion was pre-notified and could have avoided the

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attack as well as the hope of the matrix is free from the captivity; then, the film abruptly comes an end. Although it does not describe the subsequent state, the audience might know the mobile was transmitted through the e-mail, which can be proven at the end of the movie version.
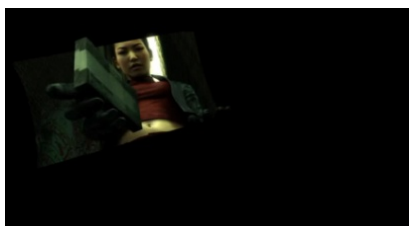

Fig. 7 When Jue enters into the matrix

Fig. 8 Jue struggles to put the mobile into the relay station – the e-mail
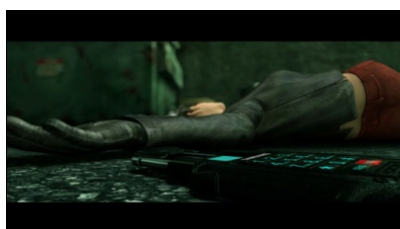

Fig. 9 Before Jue falls down

IV. "VIRTUAL" AND "AUTHENTIC"

The concept of space and time, the images and the interactive models in the matrix are dominated by various programs and results of the staggered effects. These programs are created by the matrix, but during the operation process; it has developed its own autonomy which is out of the matrix's reach. The "Existence" and the "Myself" in "The Matrix" is as the opposite pair of "virtual" and "authentic". Being a human being in the matrix and the Zion group that is out of the control, it has clearly the best contrast for "virtual" and "authentic". However, Neo and the others have been looking for "Existence" and "Myself", whether their definitions are exactly as Soren Kierkegaard (1813~1855), the philosopher, said: "Existence is the possibility that people choose to be self". The choice itself is not free, so freedom of people and self may not possibly "exist". What follows is the fear and inner emptiness caused by the wrong choice, a dark spot that cannot be removed and has lingered since ancient time for human beings, where it continues to occur in the movie "The Matrix".

Owing to the genre of computer and cyber hackers, "The Matrix" is classified as cyberpunk genre which usually speaks of the image of Utopia. Cyberpunk is a word blending cybernetics and punk, a branch of the sci-fi stories. It usually uses computer or information technology as the theme together with a plot of social disorder. In "The Matrix" and "The Animatrix", Utopia is only an illusion at the matrix [6]. In the real world, the matrix will instantly change into a huge cage that incarcerates the bodies. In the nation of "01" controlled by the machines, humans are forced to accept the virtual illusions. For Neo and others who wake up in the "real", it is just like hell [5]. The binary system consists of two digits. All modern computer technology uses the binary system, which consists only of 0s and 1s. In "Second Renaissance Part I & Part II", "01" refers to the nation created by the computer. Cyberpunk literature strongly reflects dystopia and pessimism, just like in "The Matrix". By the confrontation of the human beings with the matrix, it reflects the worries of modern-day society. The savior Neo is entrusted to save the last promise land – Zion.

Fig. 10 I, Robot

Fig. 11 Surrogates

Fig. 12 Terminator

In certain cultures, this type of sci-fi movies would portray the real hopes and fears that people are familiar with. Before humans developed computer technology under their own service, it was not expected that technology would not be able to release humans spiritually or bodily, but to dominate and to destroy human beings. For instance, "I, Robot" (Fig. 10), "Surrogates" (Fig. 11) and "Terminator" (Fig. 12) are movies of similar themes.

V. THE EFFECT OF "SIMULACRUM" IN THE MOVIE

In the narrative structure, there are various indicators of the

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role's choice, such as the door, the channel and others, just like in "Fullmetal Alchemist" where Elric brothers virtualize the media or the channel through the door of truth. It is the self-reminder of Myself in the sub-consciousness. They are the symbolic "simulacrum" of the sub-consciousness. In "The Matrix", the sockets at the back of the characters' heads are the channels used by the characters who recognize the spaces where they exist. The characters may learn martial arts knowledge in these virtual channels which can also been seen as a sanctuary to escape from the external world. Luckier than those human beings in the matrix, they can be freed from the simulacrum created by the computer at any time and go back to the reality [2]. After the characters are recognized by the audience, they become "real persons" and could actually engage with the "actual" characters' emotions throughout the movie. The pain of the audience in different aspects of daily life can reach to a certain level of relief after the characters' problems or pains find their own release in different movie types [3]. In the film architecture, the audience is the center of the world. After they enter into the images, the "Myself" of them is not the empirical self anymore, and the provision of psychological compensation for their daily life pains and problems can be achieved by facing daily life incidents and thinking of the ways to cope with them through the movie, and the meanings are carried by the contents of the movie.

As most films mainly present the universal cognition and values, when "death" is involved in the narrative, the story would also emphasize the current appropriate values [3]. "Death" is the most significant and the final fate faced by all human beings, and no one can escape from the cruel reality. As human beings invented movies, we take the death form into a new era. By using technology in movies, we can concretely and objectively simulate the reality and the quasi-long-lived dynamic images, allowing the audience to have the psychological satisfaction of conquering "death" [4]. Traditional Christian theology emphasizes: The spirit and the body are separate, and the body is the carrier of the soul. Only the soul is the "Me-self". In "The Matrix", "death" is not an eternal termination, but an incident between eternity and life. Thus, in "The Final Flight of Osiris", the importance of Jue and the crew's struggle and death is reduced in "The Matrix". The audience becomes more receptive with the continuous death of the characters. In "The Matrix" and "The Animatrix", the understanding that makes the believers accept death is: "To see current life as a short episode of the spiritual world".

VI. Conclusion

"Film identity" and "religious identity" are both projective identification; to project part of yourself and inner-self to the other party. In this interaction, you agree with or control the projection. It refers to the mutual interactive process of the projector and the receptor in the sub-consciousness. The projection is on the actions or stories of the main characters. By identifying with the conflicts and the directions of the characters and the stories, the viewing experience would become secularized. In "The Matrix", simulacrum are everywhere. With the contrast of "authentic" and "real", the

fictional reality is unparalleled in the mind, but it is a "simulated" promised land arranged by the programs. When facing the future, Myself must make a choice: to choose the simulated life, interactions, space, time and the other fantasized scenarios inside the matrix, or to leave the matrix for the barren and the reality [1]. What comes with the "choice is the "existence" of self and consciousness.

In the post-modern world of "simulacrum", the self-world has been dissolved in the "simulation" process. The "simulacrum" mentioned in "The Matrix" is not the process of the simulation or imitation of the real world and traditions, but it is the "re-simulation" and "duplication" of the matrix and self-imagination. During the process of continuous splitting and the pursuit of the real self-existence, "The Animatrix" allows the audience to go beyond the reality. Through different branch stories and the struggles of the numerous hackers to leave the matrix, it becomes a virtual venue for the audience who attempt to understand the ideas of "Existence" and "Myself".

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