Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi / The Journal of International Social Research
Cilt: 11 Sayı: 61 Yıl: 2018 Volume: 11 Issue: 61 Year: 2018
www.sosyalarastirmalar.com Issn: 1307-9581
http://dx.doi.org/10.17719/jisr.2018.2944

"THE SUICIDE SHOP" AS AN EXAMPLE OF DARK HUMOR

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Abstract

Humor, in general, uses some kind of symbols rather than objecting an idea or event directly to reader or spectator. In this sense, symbolizing which is used in almost every kind of art based on drawing, has also great harmony with humor. Caricature and animation are taking advantage of humor more than any other drawing-based art disciplines. Moreover, caricature can be defined as art form of humor. In "The Suicide Shop" film, this combination between humor and art is extended to upper limits through dark comedy. In this paper, humor and animation art relation is tried to be conveyed through the elements of visual expression through film. The connection between humor and the art of animation are tried to be discussed.

Keywords: Humor, Animation, Art, Filmic Analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Definition of Humor

According to the definition of the main Britannica, humor is an expression of Arabic origin and it reflects the ridiculous, unusual, contradictory aspects of events, and is expressed as the art of making people think, entertaining or making them laugh. The Turkish version of the word is "Güldürü (Humor)". Although they do not agree on the definition of humor, researchers believe that it is not possible to define humor in a way that will meet all meanings of it (Khramtsova, 1996, 7; Yardımcı, 2010, 2).

According to Adams, all funny or entertaining movements or expressions, all the elements that contribute to a person's pleasure, and any object that makes someone laugh is an element of humor (Susa, 2002, 45; Yardımcı, 2010, 2-3). The historical processes of humor can trace back to Anatolian civilizations. The humor that has various expressions in different geographies has a long history in our country. In this context, the use of humor as storytelling element can be found in Uighur miniatures. Especially in character descriptions, Uighur-type slanting, red and plump cheeked figures are the examples of linear deformation. These figures, which go beyond the classical boundaries and the ratio / proportional logic of the picture, can be considered as early examples of cartoon. The tradition of conveying an event observed in both Egyptian hieroglyphics and miniatures using symbols or figures and objects in a particular story can be associated with the art of animation as well.

1.2. Art of Animation and Humor

Within the current film industry, the art of animation is a unique production area. Animation film art is preferred by the producers due to its important role in the narrative of cinema films, commercials and computer games. Within this broad scope, animation film production has its own specific industrial, technical and aesthetic matters. Animation film production is a production system that needs to be examined specifically because of these qualities (Özden, Ülgen, 2015, 24). However, the visual elements of the art of animation distinguish it from the realistic films. This is the main factor that makes the animation different. This element, which makes animation so distinct, is the fact that it adopts a humor-based approach in both cartoons and stories. It is possible to see humor and

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animation as two parts of a whole and to evaluate them within this scope. The art of animation can take on innovative forms with the help of various drawing styles, or by presenting original examples in terms of content.

2. The Suicide Shop (2012)

Le Magasin des suicides/The Suicide Shop (2012) is a cartoon adapted from the novel of Jean Teulé. The film is a co-production of France, Canada and Belgium. The Tuvache family operates a suicide shop and they offer guaranteed suicide service to people. Many customers shop from this shop which has variety of execution equipment, chemical products, since the world is getting worse day by day (see Picture 1).

Since committing suicide is not legal, the Tuvache family asks the customers to commit suicide somewhere far away from the shop. All this pessimistic structure is about change with their third children of the Tuvache family: Alan. Alan will be friendly and cheerful, unlike the family members and the unhappy majority living on the planet earth, he will maintain the hopes for happiness in the new world and take part in the efforts against suicide attempts. However, this situation makes Mishima Tuvache nervous.

2.1. Visual Elements of the Film

2.1.1. Character

The main characters of the film are the Tuvache family. Mishima Tuvache is the father and Lucrice Tuvache is the mother. Vincent (son-middle child), Marilyn Tuvache (elder sister) and Alan Tuvache (the youngest son) are the rest members of the family. The family looks fairly unhappy and disgusted due to running a suicide shop, except for Alan. Their depression is certainly clear in both cartoon representations and expressions of the three characters. Also, Mishima Tuvache is a character with a tall, slender figure and has big eyes, mustache and wears a suit. Mishima Tuvache has psychological depression in the film's following scenes. The fact that this is a workplace that encourages people to commit suicide starts to bother him. However, it will take a long time for Mishima Tuvache to change his pessimistic personality. His wife Lucrice Tuvache is depicted as plump and with glasses. Vincent (son-middle child) is portrayed as a slender boy, while his sister (Marilyn) is portrayed as a plump but attractive figure. Vincent always draws pictures of darkness and evil. It is clear that they inspired by Vincent Van Gogh in the creation of Vincent. Marilyn, on the other hand, is the first character in the family to become optimistic, after a period of being pessimistic. In the scene where Marilyn perform belly dancing are important scenes that proves Alan has managed to realize his goals (seeing people happy again). What Marilyn has experienced with her boyfriend will be the stepping stone to turn the suicide shop into a pancake shop.

Alan Tuvache, as noted, is the small child representing the symbol of hope. At the time of his birth, Alan shows his first reaction by laughing and not crying. Alan's constantly similing causes a great panic in the family. In the face of this unusual situation, family members try to change Alan to behave just like themselves. They wish his smile would be gone soon. Alan, later in his life, finds his purpose: which is to stop suicides together with friends who believe in hope in the world. These goals, which are completely the opposite of his family's life and the business they are running, will push Alan to discover and show the good aspects of his family. This struggle is the main adventure of the film. In addition to the main characters of the film (Tuvache family) there are Marilyn's boyfriend, Alan's school friends, customers who wish to commit suicide, customers who eat pancakes in the final scenes, and policemen appearing in the middle scenes.

2.1.2. Light and Color

In terms of lighting and color, sharp light effects are observed throughout the film which is defined as dramatic light. The light is provided from a specific light source (lamp, chandelier, etc.) to indoor scenes, the light is provided with street lamps in the outdoor scenes (see Picture 1 & Picture 2).

In general, dramatic light - except for daytime scenes-is utilized. In accordance with the content of the story, dim, dark scene depictions are observed.



Picture 1: Some equipment and chemicals at the suicide shop.

The color elements are observed to be green, red, brown and black tones. Dark brown, gray and black tones are used in the characters' eye circles in accordance with their sad, hopeless attitude. The hair, moustache and tie, and the crow's feet around the eyes of Mishima Tuvache, one of the main characters, are depicted in black. Mishima also wears green jacket and brown trousers. The color brown depicts the soil and nature and it also makes people think of being buried under the soil, after death. The color Black, however, directly evokes evil. The green coat on Mishima gives the character a distinctive personality. Green is also used for Alan, the only happy member of the family, but this time a more vibrant tone is used (see Picture 2). The field is depicted with light brown rough hair, green t-shirt and purple long sleeves. The whiteness in the teeth is evident in a way that matches his smile. Alan's white smile represents beauty and peace in contrast to his father being depicted blackish tones. Alan's ability to destroy the whole purpose of the suicide shop is depicted using the color white. In many films like this, the struggle of evil and good is conveyed through white and black. Using the universal meanings of white and black is important to be able to convey the characters's pre-information to the audience and these two colors are widely used.



Picture 2: Tuvache family at dinner.

Lucrice Tuvache in the role of mother is portrayed in red and purple colors to represent the feminine features. Her purple glasses, red lipstick and dress highlight her feminine role. Her brown curly hair and sulky expression gives information about the character's personality. Lucrice is one of the first characters to consider the idea of transforming the suicide shop- after Alan and Marilyn- and her attitude that convinces the father, highlights her role as a mother and a woman. These warm feelings of Lucrice are represented using purple and red.

Marilyn Tuvache is one of the desperate members of the family, but her change will affect the Tuvache family in its entirety. The efforts of Alan to lead people to hope and happiness will have successful results on Marilyn. Marilyn, with her long blonde hair and purple costume, portrays the pessimism of her parents and siblings as well as hides a distinctive youthful joy. Marilyn's blond hair, as well as its character, has two meanings: sadness and birth. Yellow, representing the autumn, means sadness, but it also means birth due to also being related to the sun. Marilyn, listening to the oriental music that Alan gave her gets rid of all her negative feelings and starts dancing. Marilyn's dance, which is one of the important scenes of the film, can be considered as a reflection of the positive meanings of yellow. Vincent, another member of the family, was portrayed with dark brown hair and black circles surrounding her eyes (see Picture 2). The paintings evoking death that Vincent paints shows his artistic personality. It is obvious that he was named after the Vincent Van Gogh. Another prominent color in the film is gray. Streets and buildings are all depicted in shades of gray. All negative thoughts on people are also associated with gray.

3. Conclusion

Humor provides the audience with the idea that it wants to convey with laughter and uses different means to do so (theatre, cinema, cartoon, literature, etc.). The fact that humor can be expressed in many areas of art reveals its power and impact. Also conveying a social matter, truth or distorted truth through humor or using the symbolizing language of humor instead of reflecting directly increases the persistence of thought in the mind of the recipient.

The examples of humor combined with the tragedy can be defined as dark humor. The nature of the suicide shop that distinguishes it from other cartoon examples is the strong dark humor it possesses in its narration. The suicide shop comes from the name of a shop that offers suicide services to people. The story is about a family running the suicide shop.

After the modernization, the living conditions have gotten worse, the people who are completely detached from the nature and are trapped in gray, ugly buildings do not want to live anymore. Suicide cases are becoming widespread. In order to investigate these suicides, which are illegal, state officials do not bother to take any actions. In this fiction world, the new member of the Tuvache family Alan will prove that there is still hope. Alan has a positive mood, as opposed to his other family members. So much that his father no matter how hard he tries to change his son's smiling face, always fails to do so. Alan will try to persuade people not to commit suicide and convince them to have a happy new world order together with his small group of friends. All of his efforts will be successful. The fact that this version of the story, which looks like a war between the good and the bad, does not change the fact that the Suicide Shop contains highly critical elements.

When the film is assessed with visual elements (character and light/color), it is seen that the content and descriptions are compatible. The characters were tried to be conveyed in compliance with their personal characteristics. It can be said that the cartoon style also has a unique nature. Lighting is provided on a specific light source axis (lamp, street lights) and the indoor places are depicted using dim light to match people's depression. After the transformation of the suicide shop into a pancake shop, the lighting of the place is augmented. The transition between the two states of emotion has been tried to be reflected using colors and character expressions.

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Picture 1 & Picture 2: "Le Magasin des suicides: photo Patrice Leconte", [02.10.2018].
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