

Modern Mythology in Animation

Fattaneh Bolourieh, Akbar Alemi

Department of Art and Architecture, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to study superheroes as modern mythologies which have originated from comic strips magazines and graphic novels. Proliferation of comic strip magazines that have mostly benefited from selling superheroic genres as well as blockbuster movies and animations made upon this genre have made the producers and the psychologists think why this genre has been, at time, more influential than a religion and were successful absorbing a huge audience from kids to religious leaders. This effect has been to such an extent that many prominent comic strip publishers are trying to introduce themselves as the producers of superhero movies too. From the view point of mythologists, researchers, and sociologists this emphasizes the importance of the mythical aspect of superheroes.

Also the fact that presenting them as mythologies with modern structures that like an archetype have had such a deep and universal effect, is taken into consideration. This myth-based view point is so important that creates these modern myths, and makes itself known as the first creator of superheroes, and makes huge investments on superhero movies and using them as modern mythologies, which the countries with more ancient culture that have deeper roots of mythology have ignored this fact.

KEYWORDS: Graphic novel; comic strip; superhero.

INTRODUCTION

Most of the current discussions attempt that human being think about the destiny and his existence conditions and explaining what is unjustified scientifically while some personalities such as Superman and batman by a mythical nature visually narrates what we are searching in our unconscious and attract many audiences from a child to adult and creating teenager super stories or child super inspired by superman are of these examples. Superhero stories are occurred in a vague space and present a kind of break feeling and they try by giving a symbolic and allegorical of logical puzzles that science tries to find an answer for them, explains the world and they were successful for the mythical structure.

Sometimes they know them some routine plans that express meaningless message. But as Ambertoako explains a polite reader or audience that expects to activate its imaginary mind during thought stress of narration or soap opera. In rest time, it requires a childish laziness and magnificence display and routine items in different forms give him comfort but we should know that these current superheroes are not changed into unusual, innovative and evil monsters that have optimism and dreams in the lower layers.

Modern mythology and animation

As we know of mythology, it is a story about legendary gods and superheroes that are expressed to justify fear of natural things and unknowns or desires. Although the mythologies seems unreal stories and less consistency is between them and normal life (4), it seems that they affect the behavior and manner, action and reaction of people to the end of life and mythology reflects the latent and obvious thoughts of an ethnicity and we know the cultures with more mythologies as rich. Young cultures created mythology and they are abundantly used in the animations and films. Unfortunately, we Iranians, with a long background in mythology, have ignored this collective phenomenon.

(But if mythology doesn't meet the demands of collective requests now and doesn't reflect the live attitude of a community, it will be remained as an old ideology but live mythology reflects latent beliefs and long-term desires of a community. Most of the mythologies in the current world got famous by the power of cinema)*1(8)

Mythology experts refer to the need of human being to mythology and they don't restrict it to a special time and emphasize that in a dynamic society, mythologies change according to the time, requirements and desires and are transferred from one generation to another (6). In the culture of a country like America, with no long history, by technological progress, this need was completely tangible and as the result of them, they created modern

*Corresponding author: Fattaneh Bolourieh, Department of Art and Architecture, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran.
Email: fattanehbolourieh@yahoo.com

mythologies (3) {America achieve independence in 1776}. Mythology experts believe that these mythologies are new forms of old mythologies. "Greek and Rome gods are still alive and they only wore mask and cape"*

Superheroes such as Superman, Batman and Wonderman fight against evil by supernatural power and fulfill the demands of collective desires. As Young says, mythology is a collective dream and they were mostly successful (2).

Rolan Barthes knows the end of mythology as the immobilized world.

Antonio Moreno refers to the heroes of the stories and cartoons of the children such as Superman and Walt Disney cartoons and superheroes know these stories and programs an interpretation of good and evil mythological thought, brightness and darkness that finally good is defeats evil and it is as all these images are example because the feeling of the sameness with the main model is motivated and the reality is fulfilled in this way (15).

According to Mircha Eliade, mythological behavior is not perished in the modern world and its practice basis is change and it is more tangible.

For example, we can refer to J.R.R Tolkien story and lord of the rings film that are remained in the unconscious as they have mythological structure as deeply.

Mythologies decode many meanings for different people and for some people, mythology is not real and for others, the mythologies express the realities and the meaning of life.

Frank mc Connell said: The dreams are the stories that are with us during a day and they guide us during the day but mythologies guide us during the night.

All people should have mythologies. If the old mythologies are not believable for them, we should make new mythologies for them. The mythology says something that is not said via normal methods such as logical or metaphysics ways. Not only new mythologies fill the gap of mythology, but also improve the meaning of our life as tangible.

But in the societies with different walks of life in which inferiority complex and social problems, in a society in which the machines determine the action of human being, mythological superheroes have super natural power representing a normal imaginary citizen power that cannot fulfill their desires. Super man is a typical mythology for such an audience. He dedicated his life to fight against evils. The readers are entitled to sympathy with the superman image and every simple employee in America wishes that one day a superman came to the tomb of his current personality to compensate for his evil years (3).

Superman is the first superhero and modern mythology and is accepted by the society as it had an old model and after than various forms of super heroes that most of them were more powerful than a superman, was created. In the current mechanized world that human being is faced with many problems and as the mythologies are alive in all societies, what is their position in the modern world? The scientists referred to this point that superheroes were fulfilling the needs of legend and mythology. Superheroes meet the old demand of a human being to a powerful protector, guider, helper or protecting angel saving them with a miracle (12).

Frank miller: It is very comforting to know than there is a godly personality that solves our problems; this is a great part of what superheroes are looking for it (18).

New examples such as women superheroes, successful example of which is Wonderman, there were many national superheroes such as the captain of America, teenager superheroes, anti-social superheroes such as halk, etc that had their own audiences. The creators of modern mythologies always were combining imaginary and legendary themes with modern entertainments of American culture and these modern personalities were created (10).

Different kinds of superheroes (10)

Various kinds of superheroes caused that there are various divisions of them in the world. Some of them in terms of audience, personality type and sociology that here we mentioned the most important and famous examples of super heroes according to the dictionary of superhero.

Division in terms of personality type

Monster superheroes (Hulk), funny superheroes (Fatman), Cartoon superheroes (Mighty Mouse), supernatural superhero (Swamp Thing).

Classification based on original country

American superhero. (Superman. Batman), Japanese superheroes (Astro boy), superheroes outside the America. (Rostam in Iran, Doga in India and Zenith in England)(17).

* **Michael uslan**, the collector of illustrative books and the producer of Hollywood films famous for the production of Batman movie.

Classification based on sociology

National superhero (American captain), religious superheroes (Nagraj based on Hendo religion), group superheroes (Fantastic four) and orphan superheroes (Batman, Robin).

Classification based on audience

Women superheroes (Wonderman), teenager superheroes (Robin) and men superheroes (X men).

According to Rolan Bart "mythology is a speech, a message", so different structural forms from literature and a ritual to photography and cinema can be used to transfer this message and these modern mythologies were originated in more modern structures. Modern mythologies were born at first in illustrative books and then they were successful in Animation and cinema as superheroes were introduced as a genre in cinema, animation and illustrative books (22). Alison Mc Mahan knows Batman the first modern film and knows its success due to the mythological nature of Batman and the familiar personalities (21). In recent years, the success of some movies such as Spiderman, Xmen, Hulk, Matrix astonished Hollywood film producers. Good sale of Matrix owes to the American mythological story completely conformed with the current culture of America. In 1941s, Superman was the first superhero being filmed in Animation. Superman cartoon was produced by Flischer from 1941 to 1943 that was accepted considerably by most of the people. By the increasing number of TV audiences in 1960, superheroes were most famous in animation TV serials among children including Superman, Batman and Spider man (13).

In 1970, Japanese by imitating the superheroes of America, produced animations with their creativity, Kagakuninja was one of the successful examples and later most of the animations modeled it.

William Hana and Joseph Barbera were TV animation pioneers and we know them of some Tom and Jerry and Yogi and other cartoon personalities. As they were modern mythological pioneers in animation, namely in young superheroes and one of their superheroes was Atom ant that is one of the super hero animals and it is one of the humorous imitation of superheroes (13).

Hana Barbara studio that was aware of the success of modern mythologies in Animation, focused mainly on superhero genre in Animation and Incredibles, JR Frankenstein were the other examples.

Television at first decreased the fame of comic books and other media because it was a cheap, available media and an audio-visual entertainment and illustrative books couldn't compete with them and this caused that publishers create more creative ones to attract most of the audiences and adults and when the superhero entered the TV, it promoted illustrative books as DC company dedicated a genre to illustration books being produced of TV programs and according to them and although manufacturing companies of illustration books such as DC the publication of other genres were continued but they believed that in TV era, super hero genre is the success key of illustration books. When special effects technology was limited, illustrative books were more successful in narrating imaginary and scientific stories than a film but today, as we are in the era of digital technologies and animation and special effects made everything possible, animation and cinema are suitable media to develop these modern mythologies as some successful companies such as Marole and DC attempt to introduce themselves as film making independent companies and if we ask a boy that he likes spider man or not? He will say; Yes, I have seen the cartoon many times, I have the DVD and I did the video game, but when we ask him, when was the last time, he purchased a comic strip book about Spider man, he will ask astonishingly: What is comic strip?" (12)

And superhuman animations had a style gradually including simple graphic and more action and more animations. Other influences in this genre in Animation are animations with animal superheroes being narrated as a comedy or incredibles animation that by an intelligent inspiration of this genre are produced for animation media.

Why Animation is a good media for modern mythologies

"characteristic of a mythology is changing the meaning to a form", cinema and animation have the same duty to display a meaning in the best form and animation specifically as with no visual limitation and it is extended to a person imagination and it is linked with imagination like mythology.

"everything entering the imagination of a person is mythology" and is linked with the unconscious like mythology and to interpret the realities of the world, is linked with the childhood of people and express its worldview like a child drawing its imagination in a structure valuable in terms of semiologists. In Modern and post-Modern era, Animation and cinema are better than literature. But this modern life caused that its modern mythologies are not as powerful as old mythologies. Poivre davor introduces video phenomenon a mythology and says by the advent of video, thought is transferred from the brain to eye.

In Japan the artists are being influenced by animations and American illustrative books. Akira was mostly similar to Superman or Yushi Kishoro as the most famous artists of Japan that was mostly inspired by Frank Miller. Americans were influenced by Manga and Anime of Japan and most important examples are Matrix movie whose writer and director, combined the elements of Manga, anime, American graphic stories, superheroes, Hung Kung cinema, philosophy and scientific genre and special effects and special story narration style help it to produce a film

including a great number of audiences and Yushi Yukito, one of the famous directors of Japan says about the main version of Matrix movie: This is a film but it used special techniques of Anime and I am happy that this was done with a new vision to Anime (17).

Japan used effecting power of mythology by this thought and it is a strong center in competition with America Animation.

Akira animation, spirited away, Howls moving castle like America didn't use modern mythologies as an independent genre but some themes of eastern mythologies consistent with animation modern structure being changed. Miazaki with cinema principles, Shinto ancient forms (local Japan religion) with an inner continuous and continuation with natural world are used and cultural mythologies of Japan like constancy with the nature are used in animations.

Miazaki is one of the famous directors of Animeh and his films are the translation of Shinto beliefs being conformed with global culture and the inspiration of scientific stories of America, Greed mythologies and English children literature to build hybrid modern mythologies for industry era audience in all over the world.

When we see Miazaki films, we reach the world view that its reference are ancient beliefs and Japan mythologies. His films are a good combination of Shinto, materialistic and spiritual lives. His new films Howls moving castle benefited more of these mythological possibility and daily secret between human being and natural world and he avoids the rejection of modern world and industrialization (17).

Miazaki attempted to separate himself of meaning and nationalism policies as the inseparable components of Shinto and works on perfectionism cultural mythologies in ancient Japan. The main success of the work of Miazaki is his skill in the translation of Shinto beliefs and Japanese mythologies, he puts these beliefs beside global culture.

And we with a long-time background in old mythologies can use animation as a good structure to express mythology and create a way to make modern mythologies and we should consider it as a very important genre and get the help of researchers and mythology experts in animation scrip writing and provide a bank of mythologies to create a bridge between old mythologies and new values and give them to the artistes and cinema and animation and we should do as not only damaging the mythologies but also we should improve them. Because animation benefits more as a media carrying this meaning and global nature and old form of mythology is a good basis for animation and attracts audience and a national style in Iran animation is achieved.

Conclusion

Classic image of superheroes shows people with super natural powers being created at the center of new media such as graphic stories and cinema. Some personalities who were famous with their mythological characteristics and the modern reader and audience with the same old familiar stories manifested in a modern appearance and meet its demand to the mythology and enjoy it and more audiences of this superhero indicate this claim (19). But these superheroes are appeared in the west civilization and young cultures in need of creating mythology and its importance but due to trading and market reasons after a while use any situation to complete the story and it causes that the audience gets far from them but due to the best identity of hero, the crisis is solved easily and the narration is remained in the realm of short story. While traditional mythologies are created in the history and they were evolved and they are not involved with this problem and they have high human and aesthetic values and unfortunately Iran with the great treasure of legends and supernatural mythologies is neglectful of this issue and our children are looking for a lost identity. The current Iranian children more than Rostam or thousands of Iranian mythologies and superheroes wish to have the cloth of spider man and this is not a problem. We should be familiar with the power of visual media and by a correct management update the mythologies that its generation is the history of Iran and Iranian culture and give the creation of modern mythologies not only due to trading reasons but also for identity reasons for our youth, as India with a good management and investment reached a good position in a while.

Persian encyclopedia- Dr. Qolamhossein Masaheb (4)

First volume- Page 117 under the world mythologies:

Superstitious and semi-superstitious stories about super natural power and gods that are transferred as narration from consecutive generations to each other.

Mythologies are different from hero stories or Jinn and fairytale that are forfeited for entertainment. Mythologies are related closely to religious narrations and these mythologies are repeated in some of religions. One of the goals of mythologies is explaining the world, the creators of mythology were personalizing the natural events.

From Aykholus era, religious mythologies and those that late writers gave a new form had a major role in the literature.

Dehkhoda dictionary (1)

Mythology: nonsense, legend

Moein Persian dictionary (5)

Myth: legend, story, nonsense

Art encyclopedia- Rouin Pakbaz (7)

Myth in Art:

Most of the anthropologists know mythology the attribute of human being. Plato, Aristotle and other philosophers such as Shling emphasized on the necessity of myth on art. The artistic importance of mythologies is in their power to tell the reality of the human values. Artistic mythology is a kind of self-motivated narration in which psychological realities, namely fears and hopes are expressed in a tangible dream language and in dramatic form. Mythology is seen in literature and art in four forms:

- a. Total and main form including 2 forms:
 1. Initial mythology in the first samples of poem or in imaginary works of ancient time (the killing scene of the Cow by Mitra)
 2. Art mythology. The complete poetic narrations (e.g. platonic mythologies)
- b. Adaptation form including two forms
 1. Symbolic mythology. Innovations requiring goal, allegories, stories (personification of Davood and Jaliat cut-head)
 2. Mythological change: Artistic works including new mythological material (Wagner Opera or Dante divine comedy)

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