Objective Methodology to Assess Animated Films Both in Academia and Film Festivals

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Abstract:

People are watching a tremendous amount of audio-visual content on daily basis, whether it is for entertainment, education, or learning. They communicate to evaluate the content presented where they always strive in order to reach the most enjoyable, varied, deepest educational material, the most informed and truthful information in a time when the cataclysm of visual and audio content, freely available to everyone connected to the Internet or via satellite TV screens has become burdensome and distracting for the audience with the accompanying torrent of advertising material. More spectators and followers have resorted to limiting their research, perusal, and viewing through special channels they trust through which they guarantee good quality scenes and relatively better content than the rest of the available. Whether by subscribing to pay TV networks or private digital channels, the need for mechanisms to identify the distinctive and exclude the bad and develop quality and selection standards have become a necessity to manage visual content provided through different platforms, for a diverse audience that has become with time more demanding and selective in its consumption of the material presented through television, cinema or the Internet.

For this reason, officials in charge of producing films, television programs and digital content via internet as well as officials of managing these platforms are in constant search for developing evaluation mechanisms in selecting content. Before, during and after implementation; quality control in all production processes for visual creative materials is very important to ensure that they are in line with the needs of the consuming public for those materials to ensure their popularity and profit. (Film Making, 2020)

Research problem: Inevitable subjectivity is of remarkable impact with regard to assessing different creativity manifestations. Specifically, and to the knowledge of the researcher, animated films competing on different academic and artistic platforms have no standardized criteria as far as the evaluation process is concerned. Thus, this paper tries to introduce a set of rubrics that may be helpful in this regard to spot differences between these films with as much subjectivity as possible.

Imposing the research: the possibility of finding unified standard criteria for evaluating the animated movies presented to the jury in technical academies and film festivals.

Research objective: The research seeks to benefit from the accumulated experiences on film criticism and academic evaluation of films, so that solutions can be applied to reach objectivity during the adjudication of the various jury committees, whether academically or artistically.

Importance of the research: to help making the evaluation process more objective and transparent.

Research methodology: The research used the analytical method by presenting the concepts of film criticism and various theses about it, through the opinions of several Arab and foreign

critics, researchers and directors. By analysing these opinions, one can explore the possibility of subjecting animated films to objective critical standards.

The Basic Concepts

-1- Art as an evaluable substance

Evaluation is an ongoing, varied and complex process in any field. Not to mention the fact that this process detects creative content that is susceptible to taste and disagreement about it, between admirers, rejecters, non-objectors, and indifferentists. Where the content is expected to cater to the taste, age and culture of a broad audience; Until it finds the approval, otherwise the public will expose it and leave it for others, and thus it will not find the desired popularity. In the beginnings of cinema, the response between the creator and the recipient took place directly without the interference of any media, and when cinematic criticism was necessary to keep pace with the new art, controversy arose about the function of criticism in the field of cinema and its position in the relationship of reception. Meaning, will this response follow the filmmakers, or will it bias towards the audience, or will it crystallize the independence from the two parties to the receiving relationship? (Shabu 2019)

-2- Film criticism and the pursuit of an evaluation of film aesthetics.

According to the Egyptian critic Amir Al-Amari, the main task of the critic is directed primarily at the audience, the audience of cinema and other arts, and the audience of readers. A critic must believe in their vision and conclude and formulate an attractive linguistic formulation, far from the concavity and the dry declarative language. Critical writing is an "individual" process, that is, it expresses the vision of its owner, and it is not a "generalization" writing that is intended to generalize the principles of a party, or to promote a political system, or a specific aesthetic system.

-3- Characteristics of the film critic

At a time when the majority of critics did not agree on the inclusive characteristics of what should be the critic entitled to deal with films examination and analysis despite his academic studies, as well as being worthy of the confidence of the readership and film professionals; thus the researcher summarizes these features:

1. Taste Integrity.
2. Enormous Capacity of Knowledge.
3. Openness to every new thing.
4. The pursuit of impartiality.

-4- Objectivity and subjectivity in film criticism

Criticism is subjective if it relies on the critic's taste and instinct, and objective if it deals with external things, in which it is separated by reason and logic, not by instinct and taste, and the judgment of the critics regarding objective criticism is similar or close. Differences in this are limited and are caused by subtle differences in tastes.

There is another aspect related to this problem, which is the power of the emotional influence that the film exerts on the audience. Although this influence is found in other arts and literature such as poetry, music and fine art, it is in cinema that it is more diversified and effective due to

the multiplicity of sources and means of influence and because of the characteristic it has. Cinema is excluded from other arts and literature, which is the property of illusion of reality, and making the receiver lives in the present during the viewing process, and this is what places a greater responsibility on the critic.

-5- The problem of subjectivity in evaluation

In the absence of critical standards based on critical, knowledge-based, scientific approach, and if this matter is understood in relation to important temporary arbitration committees and are formed according to special subjective considerations, then it is incomprehensible regarding judgments that are totally contradictory and launched by film critics who do not exercise criticism as a temporary position. Rather, it is as a permanent profession to which critics devote their effort, time, experience and cinematic knowledge, because in critical practice a critic notes the existence of great contradictions in judging films that may lead one critic to consider a film as a cinematic masterpiece, while another critic considers the very same film as a week production.

-6- Film criticism and animation criticism

At the time when we find many pages of film criticism in the newspapers and magazines in addition to the criticism and screening sites for long and short films, we notice the small number of professional animation critics in the world and the scarcity of their media space, which is not commensurate with the public's interest and the available channels for films. Animation, in addition to the fact that many owners of media and press platforms consider that animation content is only intended for children, and they treat it with less seriousness and attention, compared to live films.

At a time, some recent films have bridged the technical gap between animated films and live fictional films, such as "The Lion King", "Aladdin", and "Avatar", which enhances the role of visual effects in the live movie. Which is one of the animation arts.

-7- Academic evaluation of animation films

In view of what modern academic curricula follow, apart from impressionistic assessments in traditional schools, several colleges and institutes specialized in fine and cinematic arts have adopted rubrics evaluation models in an attempt to develop consistent, fair and impartial evaluation criteria, to allow both teachers and students to evaluate complex criteria, as well as develop a good platform for self-assessment, reflection and peer review.

Research tools and procedures

An evaluation of animation films between Objectivity and Subjectivity

Regarding the rules and criteria for selection, Lorenzo believes that every festival is different, as there are festivals that form different committees every year for viewing and selection, and there are festivals that depend on the vision of the organizing team themselves to choose the films, and in that case, the list of film nominations for competitions often depends on the criteria of each member of the committee and personal taste.

To overcome the dilemma of selecting and nominating films for jury for competitions and festivals, Lorenzo stresses that every festival needs at least one or two people assigned to select

films. They can be part of the staff or the invited experts. The judging will be more balanced if it includes members from filmmakers, educators, researchers and the press, noting that professional filmmakers may question journalists and critics, but in his opinion: "They present the more objective view, because they have a broader view."

Also, on how the evaluation and selection is made at the Cordoba Festival, Gonzales points to several aspects, including:
- Was the film well animated, consistent with the idea?
  Is the idea of the movie original and unique? Have we seen this perception before?
If the animated movie is fiction: how can we tell the story? Are the characters integrated in the novel?
If the film is abstract or experimental: is it something of an innovation? Does the movie have a concept? "

He concluded his comment: "If a film is excluded from the festival, this does not mean that the film is bad. This may simply mean that the film was not suitable for this festival in particular. The film may be rejected in a European festival simply because it is from a non-European country, and this has nothing to do with the quality of your film.

-8- Analysis of the study and results

By surveying the opinions of the participants in this proposal on the criteria for evaluation and selection of films in various festivals and academies, it becomes clear the extent of the apparent divergence in the views of the participants, and the extent of opposition to the existence of a unified system for evaluating artistic works, especially animation films. Artistic creativity requires freedom, and the creator may see that breaking artistic and other rules is one of the options available to express and announce his/her ideas.

Therefore, a number of participants, imagine that the serious awareness of the members of the jury will create a convergent opinion expressing their impressions of the artistic works under evaluation.

On the other hand, evaluation models may face a challenge in dealing with artistic fields and other creative aspects whose standards constitutes a problem that ranges from objective and subjective, based mainly on several theories - not fixed rules - that are dependent on human nature, perceptual perceptions and the emotional effects of artistic work. It may also constitute a burden on the arbitrators to review all the details, some of which may be less important in front of the idea of a brilliant and distinct artwork.

As for film festivals and events, it seems that those in charge of their management have converging views towards providing a wider margin for freedom of choice and evaluation, far from standard criteria that may benefit the student in the learning stage, but which may be detrimental to creativity and innovation, with its limitations sometimes.

Through the previous analysis, the following results can be reached:

Art criticism is closely related to artistic works, and the interest in its existence consciously present in the general and academic culture is a necessity to increase the sense and appreciation of the aesthetics of the arts around us, for the human sense flourishes and elevates the enjoyment of the arts; Therefore, artistic criticism should be considered as one of the tributaries of science,

literature and arts, that without it the cultural scene of society lacks many aesthetic values, which without criticism will be absent from being evoked and tasted.

It is also evident that cinematic and artistic criticism will continue to harmonize interactively in the treatment of artistic works between subjectivity and objectivity, while the culture, awareness and integrity of the critic remains the most important reference on the evaluation process.

Recommendations:

In order to reach objective evaluation of the animated films submitted to the jury in scientific academies or in film festivals competitions, the researcher recommends the following:

1- **Seeking** academic and professional expertise to arbitrate artistic works from animation films submitted for various competitions.

2- **Ensuring** to making room in the media and academically for artistic and cinematic criticism, especially for animation films.

3- **Tracking** the pursuit of forming several critical systems for evaluating animation films, to suit different sectors of competitions and screening platforms, by offering more ideas for different evaluation criteria.

4- **Emphasizing** the incorporation of critical studies into the various educational curricula, especially those dealing with arts, cinema, drama and literature in university education.

5- **Accenting** the role of the media to educate the public in the process of artistic criticism and aesthetic appreciation.

6- **Utilizing** professional critics to contribute to the teaching of art and film criticism materials, to enrich the curricula and give new perspectives in addition to the academic curriculum.

7- **Translating** more foreign books on film criticism into Arabic.

Refereces:

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2 Shabu, M٢٠١٩ https://eyeoncinema.net/%D8%AA%D8%A3%D8%AB%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%82%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%83%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A8-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A/