

Psychological dependence in Japanese animation films: A case of Rin Taro*

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■ 논문요약

There are many opportunistic events that accidentally happen in Rin Taro's animations. However, audiences usually enjoy them in which dramatic catastrophic scenes inflict destruction on a city. Every acquaintance that a hero meets helps him to complete his wish in <Galaxy Express 999>. Rin's animations describe the hero as a person that every acquaintance is eager to help. This means that the fulfillment of hero's wish depends on sympathy of the other persons toward the hero. Thus, the hero is psychologically dependent on the others. However, Rin Taro gradually became to describe destructive aspects of psychological dependence. A female character in 'X' has a symbiotic relationship with a computer that has a human-like jealousy. At last, it kills her from its jealousy. Rin Taro had shifted from helpful psychological dependence to destructive one in his animations. Therefore, Rin Taro described Japanese mental state as psychological dependence in his animations in accordance with the present state in Japan.

* <The Japanese Journal of Animation Studies>, 2001, vol.3, no.1A, #-52.

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I. Introduction

Psychological dependence is a key concept in Japanese animation films; it has implicitly and explicitly appeared. Rin Taro's feature animation films clearly have depicted the psychological dependence.

Rin Taro is a well-known animation director in Japan. He has worked to make animations for over 40 years. In his early career he became a chief director of TV animation series and directed many episodes of the series. After he had directed TV animations for about 20 years, he started to create feature animation films.

Rin has always created fantastic, psychic, and dynamic animations. He likes to express supernatural power and unknown world, for example, a battle between the good and the evil. His films gradually changed how to treat with the evil. First, the evil was an enemy, which was destroyed by the good. Next, the evil had not only an enormous power but also is sometimes included in the good. In these films, the evil was rather attractive. Then, Rin did not distinguish the evil from the good and equally emphasized both sides of the evil and the good in his animations because the evil has existed in a family or in a close relationship. For example, a mother of a heroine in <Galaxy Express 999>, a father of a hero in <Galaxy Express 999: Andromeda Terminal>, a sister of a hero in <Shin Kujaku Oh>, and a close friend of the hero in <X/1999> are an enemy against the hero.

II. Opportunism in Rin's films

Rin used to express passions without reason. Rin effectively used a blast of air to depict passions. When the protagonist gets angry, a wind-bell rings, and when his anger cools, it stops ringing in "I am a cat." In "A bride of a devil", when a criminal explains reason of murder, a blast of wind makes his hair float up. Jiro's passion in "The dagger of Kamui(Kamui no ken)" makes his hair float up, too. Rin might conceive that human

passion has a strong psychic power to unconsciously affect the nature.

There are many opportunistic events in Rin's films. We can see one example in "I am a cat." A young student gets away with a young lady by a carriage. Her father chases them. A cat runs after the carriage, runs in parallel with it, and helps the young student and the lady to get away. The cat has a mystical ability to sense a crisis of the young student and the lady and a running ability to run parallel with the carriage. We can see the same event in <Galaxy Express 999>. At the ending of its film, a train starts and accelerates. A heroine Metel leans out of its window. A hero Tetsuro begins to run after the train and surprisingly runs in parallel with Metel. It is very strange that the protagonist has a running ability to run after the train and run in parallel with her. Tetsuro's passion to Metel makes audiences overlook his extraordinary ability.

Even so, in his animations, Rin repeatedly depicted the psychological dependence of the protagonist since his first animation film.

III. Psychological dependence

Rin's first feature animation film is <Galaxy Express 999>, featuring a boy named Tetsuro. In this film, Rin sent a message to boys: "If you keep struggling for your wish, you can achieve it because everybody will support you." In the movie every acquaintance that Tetsuro meets on the way of his travel helps him to complete his wish, even acquaintances that are pirates do the same thing. Therefore, the pirates come together to rescue the hero in catastrophic crisis. In the next animation, <Galaxy Express 999: Andromeda Terminal>, Rin sent the same message to boys, again. Cheering boys up, however, ends at this film.

Rin directed <Harmageddon> in 1983, expressing a battle between the good and the evil. The evil in <Harmageddon> named Genma has an enormous destructive power and has continued to destroy the universe for so long time. Now, Genma starts to invade the earth, and a heroine Luna wants to protect the earth. The hero Joe suddenly

gets an extrasensory power that may be effective for protecting the earth against the invasion of Genma. Luna recruits him for defeating the evil. However Joe is shocked by an enormous evil image that Luna shows via her extrasensory power. Joe escapes from his reality and runs into his unconsciousness. Luna's spirit jumps into Joe's unconsciousness to bring him back to the real. In his unconsciousness Luna sees Joe guarded by his elder sister. This scene implies that even a good person like Joe's sister who usually guards him, prevents him from confronting the reality. Joe unconsciously depends on his sister. Joe is not able to be independent but is enforced to be independent from his sister by Luna.

As mentioned above, Genma has an enormous destructive power and has continued to destroy the universe for so long time. However, Genma instantly loses by the extra-psychic power of a few persons and completely disappears on the earth. It is the only attack that destroyed Genma. What an opportunistic ending is a victory of a few persons with the extra-psychic power! Opportunistic endings after catastrophic crisis that the protagonist comes across upon are common to Rin's films.

Next, Rin directed <The dagger of Kamui(Kamui no Ken)>. In this film, a bad guy named Tenkai who is a talented ninja kills not only Jiro's parents but also his foster mother and her daughter. For his purpose, Tenkai does not hesitate to kill anybody at all. When Tenkai's ninjas corner Jiro, strangers always rescue him. Wish fulfillment of the hero depends on help of strangers. Dependence is very important to get through in trouble in the severe ninja world.

Psychological dependence clearly appears in <Phoenix(Hino Tori)> in 1986. There are two sculptors of images of the Buddha. One is a vicious burglar, Gao, who rapes a woman by a river one day. The woman follows him, lives on his stealing, and takes care of him. Truly, she is a spirit of an insect that turns into a woman. The spirit unfortunately is killed by him, when he suspects that the spirit gives a poison to him. The burglar sees woman's dead body that disappears and turns into an original insect form, that is, a ladybug. He is very surprised at this happening and remembers the ladybug that he had saved. He has killed many persons, but he loses his mind and wanders from

place to place in despair for long time because he becomes aware that he loved the spirit so much. Then, he starts to make statues of Buddha, remembering her.

The other is a famous sculptor, Akanemaru. A human girl lives with him but is killed by two soldiers. The two soldiers bring him to a capital for making him sculpt statues of Buddha. He soon forgets the girl because he was very eager to succeed and to become famous. The spirit of the girl appears in front of Akanemaru and gives him advice for several times. He however hates the spirit of the girl and does not accept her advice. He is too eager for great success and too selfish to obey her spirit.

The burglar is wicked but have pure mind to remember the spirit of the insect. On the other hand, the famous sculptor forgets the girl. A phoenix has ability to manage spirit of all living things to transmigrate into something to live after dying. The phoenix sentences the sculptor to transmigrate into a fish. The phoenix punishes the sculptor who rejected the spirit of the girl. The sentence of the phoenix upon the sculptor suggests that dependence on the spirit is necessary for life.

IV. Variations of psychological dependence

In Rin's films, there is a different type of dependence, that is, dependence on machines. In <Galaxy Express 999>, persons wish to get a machinery body for their eternal life and turn their body into machinery one. Even after becoming a part of a machine, the part keeps an intact human mind that occasionally helps the protagonist. Not only persons but also machines intentionally rescue Tetsuro. A supporting male character named Tochiro that is dying wants to become a part of his friend's ship because he wants to help his friend. Tochiro asks Tetsuro to manipulate a computer to transmigrate his mind into a central computer of the friend's ship after his death. And Tochiro's wish realizes.

There is the reverse of dependence on a machine. Thus, it is a machine that wants to integrate into a person. In animation for video, <Take the X train>, there is a train

that has a magical power. It desires to unite a body of the protagonist into its body. The train chases and catches the protagonist. The body of protagonist is united to the body of the train. His brain, however, is intact and joyfully transmits his order to the train to move.

There is mutual dependence between a person and a machine. In <X/1999>, a supporting female character wears a helmet with which a computer is connected. Then, she can easily operate it to fight against an enemy. However, the computer can voluntarily communicate with her, loves her, and strangely kills her from jealousy. This mutual dependence is not supportive but destructive.

More obvious example of destructive dependence on computer appears in "Download" that is animation for video. In this video, a young man who is addicted to a computer wears a helmet with which a computer is connected. His brain is directly connected with a computer network via the helmet. Death mail is sent to the human brain. After the young man receives the death mail, he loses his mind and commits suicide.

We can see another destructive psychological dependence in <X/1999>. A mother of a hero, Kamui, suddenly puts her hand into her belly, pulls out a big sword out, and hands it to the hero. She orders him to go to Tokyo where the battle between the evil and the good has started, and her body is spontaneously, suddenly, and shockingly divided into bloody parts in front of the hero. This is an extremely horrible scene. However, a similar scene appears again. Huma, who is an enemy of the hero, pulls a big sword out from his sister's belly and kills her in front of the hero. They fight against each other with their swords. Thus, the swords of the hero and the enemy represent mother's love and destructive instinct, respectively, symbolizing perfect dependence on family members, that is, the mother and the sister.

Kamui cuts off Huma's head by his sword at the end of their fighting. Then he holds the head of the enemy and desperately shouts "Why?" It is very strange that he is not delighted but disappointed at defeating the enemy. The enemy originally has been the best friend of the hero. Therefore, the hero wishes to be the best friend even after

sudden evil change of his friend. It is conceivable that after cutting the head off attachment of the hero to his friend never disappears because lovely photographs of three children of Kamui, Huma, and his sister are inserted.

V. Denial of psychological dependence

Huma in <X/1999> has been Kamui's best friend as stated above. Before Huma becomes the enemy against Kamui, Huma chases his sister who was kidnapped, goes into the dreamlike another world that a lady with supernatural power controls, and sees his fate to become a superman with enormous destructive power. He accepts his fate and keeps staying there. It is very interesting that after acceptance of the fate, Huma loses all memories and feelings except destructive instinct. His personality completely changes. Then, it is Huma that kills his sister. There is a denial of a familial relationship to be a devil.

One episode in <Shin Kjuaku Oh> is very similar to Huma's one. However, we can see a quite different result. The hero Kjuaku loses his consciousness after being defeated by his sister with demonic supernatural power. His mind has gone to the other world. His body without consciousness is lying down in front of his girlfriend. She prays that Kjuaku's mind will go back to his body. Her praying causes light in front of Kjuaku's mind in the other world. This light indicates the right way to get out of the other world. Thus, two things are necessary for Kjuaku's mind going back to his body. They are the wish of his girlfriend and its acceptance of Kjuaku's mind. This means that if Kjuaku's mind denied the wish of his girlfriend, he would keep staying in the other world as the same as Huma.

Return of human mind from unconsciousness is familiar to us via <Harmageddon> as mentioned before. However, Huma who keeps staying in the other world is exceptional in Rin's film. Amnesiac and apathetic Huma may be an example of a person with mental problems. Therefore, Rin may conceive that a denial of psychological dependence

causes mental problems.

VI. Conclusions

Rin usually depicted various opportunistic events in his films. He certainly attracted attention of audiences to catastrophic destruction that was dramatically directed. Exaggerated destruction in Rin's films made us forget his opportunism. The opportunistic events in Rin's films were usually based on psychological dependence. His message is that not only people but also a spirit and a machine help a hero who is in a crisis. However, later he depicted a destructive side of psychological dependence. A person sometimes has a symbiotic relationship to the other persons and, as a result, is destroyed. Rin might be satiated with the usual psychological dependence and wanted to depict bizarre psychological dependence and its denial for his fantasy.