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A comparative analysis of character animation and performance between American and Japanese feature film animation

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Abstract

This research paper seeks to gain a better understanding of the disparity in character animation and performance between Japanese and American animation through a comparative analysis of feature films by Studio Ghibli and Disney. The analysis incorporates an investigation into the cultural and historical elements that influenced the development of the medium in both regions as well as the individuals that pioneered animation techniques and approaches to performance that contributed to both studios' unique styles. Beyond the textual and technological readings of animation, this research paper engages with performance theory and seeks to explore the disparity in animation based on performative differences. By gaining, a nuanced understanding of performance *in* animation and the characteristics of these forms of performance one can gain a greater understanding of how each studio approaches character animation and performance, and why these approaches differ. This is achieved through identifying the difference in ideology regarding movement and the processes by which these movements are rendered. The identification of the key performance models -figurative or embodied- and their use by each studio is then re-integrated into the greater discussion regarding the textual and technological readings of animation and how the textual and technological elements help reinforce the unique style and approach to each performance mode. Thus gaining a nuanced understanding of the medium in both regions in regards to animation production and the disparity in animation on a performative level.