

An Analysis of the Images in Hayao Miyazaki's Movies from the Perspective of Cognitive Metaphor

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Abstract

Hayao Miyazaki's (born on January 5, 1941 in Tokyo), is a Japanese animator, animation producer, cartoonist, animation director, and animation screenwriter. His movies have lasting impact. Based on the conceptual metaphor theory of cognitive linguistics, this study analyzes the multi-modal metaphors in his animated movies to explore his cognitive needs behind his creation and find out how these metaphors are generated. This paper uses the method of qualitative analysis and comprehensively analyzes the images, aiming to answer two questions: 1) What are the multi-modal metaphors in his animated movies? 2) What cognitive needs and creative motivations do these multi-modal metaphors reflect in his movies?

In this paper, five of Miyazaki's animated movies are employed to analyze the images in it. The secondary data was collected from the website of movies. The results of the study showed that there is a large number of non-textual metaphors in his movies, such as: Pig, Totoro, Oil house, Chihiro, Animals, Fire, Bridge, Tain, and so on. These multimodal metaphors reflect the cognitive needs and psychological motivations behind his creations. Through the analysis of Hayao Miyazaki himself, basic color, emotions, space, daily habits, national culture and other metaphorical cognition in his movies, we have a full understanding of metaphorical cognition, language and culture, national psychology and thinking habits in the process of his creation. The findings are of great importance to the cognitive study of metaphors in the field of animated movies.

Keywords: cognitive metaphor, Hayao Miyazaki Animated Movies, cognition, images

1. Introduction

In modern metaphorical studies, metaphor refers to the metaphorical expression in languages, or the conceptualization process itself. Unlike conceptual metaphors, the source and target domains of multimodal metaphors use two or more different modalities for meaning mapping, and film is a multimodal metaphorical carrier in which sound modalities and image modalities coexist, and the images in Miyazaki's works also belongs to multimodal metaphors. But there is a question we should ask as we think these images are controlled by a series of cognitive mechanisms. How is this thinking mechanism show in animated films in his works? Therefore, it is necessary to explore the construction of the meaning of image metaphor, and identify the reasons for the longevity of his movies.

Metaphor has always been an important part of linguistics. The rise of modern cognitive linguistics has provided a new perspective for the study of metaphor. Metaphor is no longer just a rhetorical device, but a cognitive tool (Wang, Li, & Li, 2022). It is a creative process of meaning, which takes metaphor into the whole human cognition and thinking process. The process of interpreting images is actually the process of understanding Miyazaki's thinking, and every metaphorical image is the embodiment of his thinking and belief. The image in his works is the embodiment of his unique cognitive experience of the world, which plays an indispensable role in the interpretation of the film theme and also an effective means for the author to create works. It constructs the unique beauty of intention with the best expression effect, so metaphor is his best method of perceiving the world.

This paper traces the development of the historical stage of metaphor development. And in "Sapir-Whorf hypothesis", this paper restates a view of the essence of language and its relationship with thinking. However, this paper does not use our most commonly used corpus to study its essence, because the images in his films are not language-based, but real objects. In this way, therefore our study of metaphor can not be limited to the

language. The article writers have identified the relationship between emotional formation and conceptual synthesis, in order to clarify the emotional attitudes and conceptual formation behind metaphorical generation, and to explore how his films are deeply attracted to the audience. From which domain is it mapped? Why could there be such a mapping? These are the main topics for discussion. Therefore, this paper carefully selects eight images from his movies as the pillars of cartoon materials. The process of metaphor generation and audience's emotional reaction are discussed, which adds evidence to the cognitive study of metaphor, explaining the psychological and physical mechanism of the generation of cognitive metaphor to enhance the credibility to the cognition behind metaphors.

2. Literature Review

Hayao Miyazaki, born on January 5, 1941 in Tokyo, is a Japanese animator, animation producer, cartoonist, animation director, and animation screenwriter. *Spirited Away*, *Hawl's Moving Castle*, *Castle in the City*, *Princess Mononoke*, *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind*, *The Wind Rises*, *Red Pig*, *Whisper of the Heart*, and *My Neighbor Totoro* are his most famous works. These works are elegant and created in a beautiful style, which breaks the age limit and gains unanimous approval from both adults and children, brings warmth to countless people and comforts their lonely hearts. He has won a high reputation in Japanese animation industry. Many of his works are famous both at home and abroad.

His works have a distinct Kurosawa style that is full of vivid images, undulating and distinct rhythms and exaggerated body movements. The weather aesthetic in a film is very important. It deeply reveals the conflicts between human nature and soul of the subject. His works are related to man and nature, war and peace, evil and justice, greed and fear. He was the first man in the Japan's animated film industry. He was honored to the 87th Academy Award for Lifetime Achievement on November 8, 2014.

His works have distinctive themes, elegant styles, and the pursuit of beauty to the extreme. The picture is created with the simple lines of the characters, coupled with extremely beautiful color rendering and smooth environment. In addition, the metaphorical image is the top priority in Hayao Miyazaki's animated film world. The lush towering trees are the mother of all life. The rotten sea in *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* symbolizes death and rebirth. *Hawl's Moving Castle* symbolizes the modern man's mind that has no place to rest. The oil house in *Spirited Away* is where chihiro's search and struggle takes place, so metaphors are everywhere in his work and can be traced from the details.

Some studies have been carried out to analyze his works, Cao, in *Miyazaki's Animation Aesthetics* (2022), studies Miyazaki's animated films from the aspects of theme, soundtrack, creative style, use of lens vision, and aesthetics. *An esthetic discussion on the cartoon characters' body shaping: a case study of Hayao Miyazaki's animations* by Tan (2015), has studied that the body is also an important way to understand the world and all kinds of corner-colored body models, in which his thoughts are embodied in. In *A Study of Hayao Miyazaki's Animation Movie*, the comprehensive system of his animated film was interpreted by Liu Deyang, who made a detailed analysis of animated film from the perspective of the theme analysis, character shaping and narrative strategy. Since the 1980's, the metaphor has been thought to be the kind of semantic phenomenon, and the metaphor research has risen to the syntactic level. With the rise of cognitive linguistics, metaphor has gradually become the focus (Zhang, 2022). It is regarded not only as a tool of rhetorical discourse, but also as a cognitive phenomenon. Different scholars have explained metaphor from different angles. Sun Shanshan analyzed the cognition relationship between body and metaphor (Sun, 2017).

The selection of his works as research materials is very necessary. He has an enduring power in the world, and his works contain deep cultural connotations, which are typical symbols for Japaneses culture. There are image metaphors in his works, reflecting his creative ideas. This obviously signifies the value of research.

3. The Mechanism of Metaphor Generation

3.1 The Relationship Between Language and Thinking

Sapir and his disciple Whorf put forward the hypothesis about the relationship of linguistic and thinking. One is linguistic determinism, that is, language is self-formation and determines people's understanding of the world. We have to know that the thought of "the Sapir•Whorf hypothesis" does not belong to the two of them, but the point of view shared by a group of linguistic relaters (Zhang, 2015).

Since Aristotle's age, thinking ontology has taken a dominant position in the western history of thought for a long time. It is believed that the oral language is the symbol of the experience of the mind. That is, the category of thinking determines the category of language. In the later Romantic period, language ontology was put forward to refute the position of language. To define the relationship between language and thought (Chen, 2011),

William Von Humboldt used his world view theory:

Language comes from some internal needs of human beings, not just from the external needs of human beings to maintain common communication. The real reason for the occurrence of language lies in human nature. Language is essential to the development of the human spirit. For the formation of world outlook, language is also indispensable, because only by establishing a clear connection between one's own thinking and others' or collective thinking one can form a clear view of the world outlook.

Language comes from some intrinsic needs of human beings, and first there is the intrinsic need for cognition, then there is the output of language, and last there is the widespread existence of metaphors.

3.2 *Non-Linguistic Metaphor*

Metaphor has been the focus of scholars' attention since the ancient time. In the past, metaphor was regarded as a mere figure of speech. However, this perception was revolutionized by the book *The Metaphor We Live By*, co-authored by Lakoff and Johnson in 1980. They argue that most concepts in life are metaphorical, and that we observe, think, and act through metaphorical lenses. Since then, metaphor has received a lot of attention from psychologists and linguists, who have accumulated a large amount of data and conducted numerous experiments to demonstrate the important role that metaphor plays in human thinking and daily behavior.

The perception of experience holds that: "The most basic feature of self-perception is the ability to clearly feel and distinguish between others or things and the self. So as to form an individual's perception of the world's things, because each individual has an internal body experience." This is the definition of experiential cognition of Wen Qiaoping. The more detailed explanation is that the brain automatically activates sensory and motor information as we go through a series of external things. The brain is also active when we look back on what we've been through. That is to say, people experience things, accumulate experience and interact with the environment, and form the basic perception and reproduction of the external world. Then physical interaction experience is closely related to cognition (Wen, 2016). What is the relationship between them? Some scholars have used computers to describe this process, that is, the human body is first a huge receptor, then the body receives stimuli and stimuli are converted into bio-electrical signals, at last, these signals transferred to the neural center of the brain to obtain its concept.

In this way, the body experience, as the most basic beginning of metaphor understanding, is based on the perception of motor experience, such as movement, stress, temperature, touch, auditory stimulation and other physical experiences are related to emotion. Because we understand that a non-verbal act, through the simulation of this experience, there is a physiological response within the body, that is, emotion. For example, the reappearance or simulation of the non-verbal act of "falling", is a metaphor for failure, and an abstraction of the event of "falling". One more example, the event of "suffocation" is a metaphor for the abstract concept of "restriction". And the event of "lifting heavy objects" is a metaphor for the abstract concept of "responsibility".

Lakoff and Johnson (1999) point out that metaphor is a mapping of one concept to another. "Sam is a pig", in this sentence "Sam" is the target domain, "pig" is the source domain. Further, physical experience is the source domain and the event behavior is the target domain. For example, the target domain "work" is mapped to the source domain of "physical support" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

In addition, metaphorical understanding interacts with emotion generation. Different metaphorical understanding of the same event can produce different emotions, on the other hand, individual emotions will also affect their metaphorical understanding of event behavior. The metaphorical understanding of non-verbal events in real life will produce similar emotions, and then produce verbal metaphors in daily language (Wen, 2016). For example, "depression" is often caused by the physical reactions that occur when people said: the body's center of gravity drops, it is prone to fall. In a nutshell, verbal metaphor is derived from a metaphorical understanding of non-verbal metaphor and the formation of corresponding emotions.

Miyazaki's movies contain profound philosophy, in which metaphor is everywhere. Behind every field lies the author's profound humanistic thoughts. Almost every character has a special meaning, and the rendering of the environment in works is even more impressive: Characters with simple lines, in the forest paved with large green, coupled with dark and blue night sky. It is a world under his brushes that can not be made with computer technology. The real and magical images resonated with the audience and wandered together in the dream-driven childhood world.

3.3 *Metaphorical Cognitive Mechanism*

Lakoff and Johnson (1999) assert that there is little expression of absolutely non-metaphorical language in life. However, the formation of metaphor is based on non-metaphorical verbal expression, and the physiological

mechanism is related to the physical experience of non-linguistic metaphor, including the most relevant association and field environment in physical space.

Image refers to a special kind of expressive artistic image, which is subjective. An image endowed with strong emotional and rational values. Along this path, film image is a kind of visualized ideographical artistic image, which is subjective in nature, and is endowed by the film author with personal emotions, rational values and abstract meaning. Image can be divided into three categories: 1) Literary image. That is, the image of film and television texts, both in characters, lines, and plot. 2) Film and television photography image, both in terms of picture content and service, as well as composition 3) Spiritual image.

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1999), metaphor is a systematic way for people to think, act and express their thoughts. The source domain and the target domain map empirical knowledge about the source domain to the target domain to help understand the characteristics of the target domain. The “five-space model” is proposed in *The Interpretation of the Cognitive Mechanism of Metaphor* (Qiao & Zeng, 2004).

In addition to their ideas, the conceptual composition theory of Fauconnier and Turner (2002) should also be mentioned. This theory posits that metaphor is a conceptual mapping across psychological spaces and is a conceptual synthesis of the four psychological spaces. It mainly refers to the two input spaces, generic space and blended space, and the author suggests adding a test space (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002).

Through selective extraction of the abstract structure and organization they share from the input space, information is merged and interacted in synthetic space, generating new meaning and knowledge of projective objects. This process is the process of conceptual synthesis, which describes the formation of the meaning of metaphorical language and reveals the psychological cognitive mechanism behind metaphor.

4. An Analysis of Hayao Miyazaki’s Works from the Perspective of Cognitive Metaphors

4.1 Bathhouse

Natural Vientiane is reflected in Miyazaki’s works. The scene in *Spirited Away* begins with Chihiro crossing the tunnel into the oil house, where there is a bathhouse for the eight gods as a symbol of Japanese national tradition. Then there are two rows of shops, using colors that are perfectly suited to the style, even red walls are not painted in a single red, but a variety of colors superimposed together.

The bathhouse is also called money soup. It first appeared in the peaceful era of Kyoto. The hot water is referred to as “soup”, and the customers must pay for their bath with “money”, “money soup” is also known as soup house. One of the features of the soup house is the mural art. Murals are a type of folk art commonly found in public places such as markets.

Japan is a particularly good country for the preservation of traditional culture. It is the birthplace of the bath, and in ancient times. People would bathe together in rivers, lakes, and seas while hunting. According to records, they were inspired by animals such as birds, deer, and monkeys, and they would immerse injured body parts in hot springs to promote healing. During farming times, bathing became integrated into daily life, and people worshiped water as a god. After the introduction of Buddhism, bath culture also spread (Zhang, 2016).

Due to their love for public and collective activities, Japanese people often talk cheerfully and exchange feelings easily in public bathrooms. This is also a unique social etiquette in Japan, just as the Chinese believe that people can only have fun talking when they sit close to each other. The Japanese believe that only in a bathhouse they can relax and express their sincerity, which means they meet naked without hiding anything. Moreover, it implies removing distracting thoughts from the mind. This concept is deeply embodied in *Spirited Away*, where the Achelous, faceless man, and other gods come to the bathhouse to cleanse themselves of impurities produced by modern society.

As for the inspiration for the bathhouse, Miyazaki said it came from a childhood dream. He once visited a Japanese bathhouse with a special and impressive arrangement. A good thought came to his mind—a special bath for immortals must be interesting. Perhaps they would want to steal half of his leisure time each day. This is the connection point between subjective experience and perceptual motor experience.

By analyzing the concept behind the bathhouse, we can understand that the metaphor includes two domains. The source domain is the ordinary bathhouse, and the target domain is an atmosphere of heart-to-heart talk. The bathhouse is a place where you can express feelings and exchange experiences. Therefore, being asked to take a shower is an invitation to communicate.

4.2 Pig

In the film *Spirited Away*, the image of a pig is significant. Chihiro’s parents, faced with the temptation of

gourmet food, showed an uncontrollable attitude. Despite their daughter's persuasion, they did not listen and continued to gobble the food. In the end, they were turned into pigs by unknown magic. The physiological characteristics of pigs, such as their wide eyes and ears, long head, nose and mouth, short feet, and fat body, give the impression that they are bulky, lazy, and even a little greedy. This impression has been positioned in people's minds, although it may not be fair to pigs.

Animal metaphors are based on people's observations and understanding of animal's physiological and behavioral characteristics. The reason Miyazaki chose pigs as a typical image is because, in Chihiro's parents' mind and this is a material society where money is paramount. Any commodity, labor, skill, and trade can be measured in monetary terms. However, in the author's mind, rules cannot be set in monetary terms. If people want to get food without any labor, they will turn into pigs that do not need to worry about finding food and drink. But the fate they face is to be slaughtered (Zhang, 2016).

It's actually a reflection of Miyazaki thinking about the rules. Every society and country has its own spiritual pillar to maintain the internal order of life-ethics. The society relies on moral norms and codes of conduct to express the basic content of its ethical morality. These moral norms and codes of conduct are exactly what he wants to think about.

Let's go back to the pig theme. Before we talk about pigs, we should pay attention to Japanese tradition. As a country with the land area equivalent to that of a single province in our country. Japan is an area where earthquakes and tsunamis occur frequently. The Japanese character of reverence of heaven and earth has been formed since then. It also created the Japanese character of pious, respectful and cautious. These characteristics are also reflected in the attitude towards pigs. In the process of distribution of Japanese livestock products, the farmers only sell the pigs to the slaughterhouse after raising them well, and then hand them over to the wholesalers who sell them to various retail outlets. Once the pork enters into circulation, the farmers that raised the pigs cannot be found out. This type of distribution is so anonymous that the pig status in Japan is even more tragic than that in China. So the consequences of breaking the rules are more serious than our Chinese people think.

The use of metaphorical pigs to represent Chihiro's parents was carefully executed. This metaphorical use of pigs serves to show that rule breakers are punished, and the process of shaping a pig is related to the thinking trend of the Japanese nation. Through this process, people can make deep connections between the metaphorical image and their daily experiences with pigs.

Lakoff's theory of the source domain and the target domain illustrates the directional interaction between the two domains, known as mapping. He also proposed the Invariance Principle, which states that every metaphorical mapping must adhere to the logical structure of the target domain, even when it conflicts with the logical structure of the source domain. Additionally, the scope and the level of the source domain mapping are determined by the metaphorical scope of the target domain, and the diversity of source domain expression is a result of the diversity of conceptual characteristics of the target domain. He was trying to solve the problem of the incompleteness or selectivity of the mapping content when the source domain is mapped to the target domain.

Although the understanding of the target domain depends on the mapping of the feature of the source domain, the author selected a pig as a metaphorical image of Chihiro's parents because the characteristics of a pig align with their portrayal. Furthermore, people's thinking habits influence the characteristics attributed to a pig.

4.3 Chihiro

The *Spirited Away* is a Japanese animation film portraying an ordinary character, Chihiro, who was timid, lazy, willful, and evasive at the beginning but grew up to be a girl who could save both herself and others. She employs a sincere and simple attitude towards money, entertainment, and reputation. In an interview, the creator of the film stated, "I'm not going to describe Japan, although I'm also concerned about the decline and pollution of the planet. It's a film for ten-years-old girls. Pollution of earth is already a fact for children living in modern times to know, and there is no need to point it out to them. All I want to do is to tell the children how to live well in this reality." Therefore, the main theme of *Spirited Away* is initiation.

We know that psycholinguistics has the advantage of suggesting the structure of psychological mapping relationships, and the reasoning models are mapped from an ontology to a metaphorical object. The creation of the character *Chihiro* is the result of the author's life experience. Weekley (1912) once said every expression we use is a metaphor, except for expressions related to the most basic objects and behaviors.

It is believed that the process of understanding the experience of a different conceptual field through the

knowledge experience of one conceptual domain metaphorical. Chihiro embodies the love of mutual support, which implies the relationship between humans and nature (Jiang, 2016). The body's knowledge of the physical attributes and characteristics of the place is expressed through her actions and movements. As time passes in the oil house, Chihiro's body and perception of environment change. In one scene, she screams as she runs past a shaky and rusty chimney pipe. Through this scene, Miyazaki portrays the character's inner fear and conveys it to the audience.

4.4 Fire

In the movie *Howl's Moving Castle*, Calcifer represents Howl's heart and his pursuit of freedom and peace, despite Howl's wandering, he persisted in his quest for freedom.

Calcifer's appearance is that of fire, which is typically associated with warmth and unrestraint. The author has a reason for choosing this design, as it allows the audience to form a first impression of Calcifer's characteristics and become more interested in the development of the plot. Everything in the story has a purpose, and Calcifer's banished heart is as unpredictable and unrestrained as fire. Just like fire, Howl's heart was seeking freedom and had nowhere to settle until he met Sophie.

Fire is one of the oldest tools and played a significant role in the development of human civilization. As an image, it has been associated with various themes such as love, religion, war and revolution. People both admire and fear fire, and this dichotomy has had a profound impact on the collective unconscious of many individuals, including Miyazaki. The construction of the image of fire in his movies is closely related to his psychological characteristics and the historical context in which he lived.

Grey ships hurl black shells, filling the world with the red flames of war. Fire is a powerful symbol of the destructive force of conflict. Miyazaki was deeply affected by World War II. In response to the post-war Japanese government, He once said, many of the problems we face today are rooted in our daily actions that harm the environment and lead to foolish decisions. During the war in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, he realized that there was no fairness in the war. War is a stage for the ugliness of human nature. These experiences inspired Miyazaki's anti-war stance, which is reflected in the powerful metaphor of his animated films. In particular, his concepts of "war without justice" resonates strongly and serves as a reminder of the devastating impact of conflicts on human lives. (Chen, 2017).

Fire of war, there must be fire in places where there is war. People call the beginning of the war as the "open fire", the cause of the war as the "blasting fuse", and the method of burning an enemy with fire is called a "fire attack". Weapons such as "fire arrow", "firelock", and "flamethrower" are all related to fire. Miyazaki set out from his anti-war thoughts and made use of the relationship between fire and war to draw a picture of the red fire reflecting on the sky, the flames roaring and the war approaching.

4.5 Totoro

We need to mention humanism first before we talk about Totoro. Humanism refers to a philosophical thought that the social value orientation tends to care for the personality of human beings, emphasizes the preservation of human dignity, advocates tolerance, opposes violence, and advocates freedom, equality and self-worth. Ghibli Studio, headed by Miyazaki, created animation with exquisite emotion, beautiful picture and unique style. It discussed the relationship between man and nature and man himself. He raised the simple animation to the height of humanism (Mao, 2009).

In the broad sense of humanism, that is, a large number of historical events, social movements, cultural thoughts related to the survival and development of Human beings, and ecological humanism permeate throughout Miyazaki's works. In *My Neighbor Totoro*, the oak seeds that Totoro gave the sisters sprouted over night. It explains to the children the growth and development of trees. Totoro is the owner of the forest and carries seeds to help the trees. In our concept, seeds symbolize hope. So the author is trying to create a hopeful atmosphere, and the seeds are a felicitously special media tool (Xu & Gai, 2018).

The unique geographical characteristics of Japan make Japanese people have a deep love of nature and a reverence for forests. Trees are the most representative natural images in ancient Japan, and their feelings and reflections on trees have become the foundation of their view of nature.

In *Kiki's Delivery Service*, the forest is the cradle of the growing children. Totoro in *My Neighbor Totoro* is the fairy guardian of the forest. He used seeds as the gift for the sisters. The forest symbolizes the instrument of purifying the soul. Our first impression of the forest is deep and serene. These two words are the most common ones we often think of. The quiet, pure metaphorical meaning of forest in animation can not be said to be inappropriate. The vast expanse of green rendered the peaceful atmosphere of the forest, as if such a forest

should appear elves that only children can understand, and should have something magical. The extended meaning of these two words is reflected in the metaphorical meaning of forest (Wu, 2015).

The story frame of *My Neighbor Totoro* is inspired by the Spanish animated film *Bee Whisper*; which is against the backdrop of a dry, cold winter in weak Spain after just four years of civil war in 1940. The background of the story *My Neighbor Totoro* is the humid and hot late spring of Showa, Japan. The image of Totoro draws lessons from the Japanese fairy tale *Acorn and Bobcat* and the legends of the Nordic giants. In addition, the image of the cat bus comes from the British novel *Ellie Walk in Wonderland*. Miyazaki's knowledge was so extensive that the traces of imagination in his work could be seen everywhere. But what is more important is his wide range of knowledge. It was because of his broad knowledge and interests that he was able to create such metaphorical works.

4.6 Animals

Furthermore, forest symbolizes environmental protection. The decaying sea in the *Valley of the Wind* is the product of the collapse of human industrial civilization, covered by fungus forests and shrouded in toxic miasma. Japanese Shinto believes that nature is an organic whole, and any part of the environment is bound to affect other parts.

Japan is a country with both traditional and modern ideas. Nowadays, all kinds of industries have their own gods, such as the god of commerce, the god of fishing, and the god of industry. Whenever a major event is held, it is necessary to sacrifice to the gods of their own. The Japanese, worship fire, water and animals, From the point of view that all things in Japan have gods, Miyazaki has created many images of gods, such as "small coal ash", "Totoro", "white dragon envoy", "river god", "king worm" and so on. The Divine world is synonymous with nature and a mirror reflecting human society. The movie's deities, usually animal-held, symbolize the traditional beliefs of Japanese folk, such as cats being able to communicate in Japan, while the highest-ranking god in Princess Mononoke is called the Kirin beast. The Mermaid of Ponyo on the Cliff comes from the folk term "Mermaid".

In the event of paddie disaster, Paddy God will send foxes that catch mice as messengers to help farmers, and Paddy God will send cats to arrest rats and solve the problem of rats stealing. Therefore, cats and foxes were used by the Japanese as messengers of the Paddy God, and they were equally revered. This also promotes the theme of harmony between man and nature in Japanese narratives, and this harmony is one of the eternal themes of Japanese films.

This is a common topic as we have discussed traditional Japanese culture before, but here we are referring to the impact of Japanese folklore on film. It can be said that every aspect of people's lives is influenced by traditional folk customs. People's cognition and thinking habits vary among nations, and the position of folk custom in people's cognition can be seen. Miyazaki uses Japanese folk legends to construct a metaphorical world, which extends the metaphorical meaning. Therefore, we first have people's cognitive habits before we have a metaphorical way.

"As a specific nation and a specific historical person, the structure of social history and the national culture's spiritual connotation have been imperceptibly deposited in the creators' hearts, forming a unique preexisting structure and aesthetic psychological set." This sentence is a good illustration of the relationship between culture and creators. Hayao Miyazaki's works are deeply influenced by national culture, customs and its connotations, especially in relation to animals.

Folk custom includes material folk custom, spiritual folk custom, and language folk custom. That is the bubble bath culture, the domestic Shinto and rice lotus belief. In Japan, fox and rice lotus are inseparable. Foxes are responsible for protecting the rice fields, bless the wind and rain. *My Neighbor Totoro* has a large number of rice fields that appear on the scene, but also the "rice-lotus god" of the fox stone. It is the relationship between the film scene and folk customs. In addition to the idea of harmony with nature, the films also reflects the daily habits of Japanese people (Xu & Gai, 2018).

Miyazaki uses folklore and Japanese customs to build the background of his animation, and the Japanese gods in his works follow the form like shadows, allowing the national audience to easily grasp the metaphorical meaning behind it. Foreign audiences can also learn about the connotations of Japanese tradition through his works. He uses many animals in his play related to Japan's pantheistic history.

4.7 Color Language

Miyazaki always adheres to the "warm animation" creative style. During the process of creating his works, the selection of colors is taken into account. He often uses green to represent forest artistic conception and blue to

represent ocean artistic conception, but color purity and brightness collocation are different. The pastoral scenery in *My Neighbor Totoro* is picturesque, with an endless field and a simple cabin set against the refreshing green background. The scene design in *Howl's Moving Castle* is imaginative, and the use of color is unique. The tonal craftsmanship allows the castle's tone to change with the development of the hero's mood and plot. Bright and dark colors, such as blond hair, red flames, black missiles, half red, half black sky and black smoke, are used. Color matching can enhance emotional infectivity, with green symbolizing life, hope and vitality, a sense of tranquility. The combination of warm and cold tones reflects the mood of the protagonist. The audience can most intuitively understand the emotional feelings expressed in the animation, which is an example of using cognitive habits to achieve an excellent overall effect. Miyazaki makes use of the sensitivity of color in people's daily lives to add metaphorical meaning to his animations, which helps to get people's cognitive identity (Zhuo & Wen, 2017).

4.8 Train and Bridge

The train image appears many times in the film. The train is not only a real-life connector between reality and the magical world, but also a carrier of time. It has an irreversible tendency to move forward, and it is a tool that leads to the future. This is the meaning behind it. The concept of a real-life train is usually associated with the start of a long journey, a carrier of people, and a means of transport connecting two places. However, the two places in the film are not of realistic significance, and this deviation of concept has metaphorical meaning (Wei, 2018). Words like "medium" and "potential" come to mind when we talk about trains. Therefore, in the extended sense of these two words, there is the tendency to move forward and the role of the bridge. The bridge has the meaning of "crossing", which is necessary to follow the law of another world, and it is the span of space that is formally distinguished from the time span of the train image. In daily life, the bridge has the meaning of crossing obstacles. By using these two images, it is easy to produce appropriate associations, and it is easy for people to experience the connotation of the animation.

We can analyze metaphors through the process of metaphorical mapping, which involves three main steps. First, gaps in the source domain are mapped to vacancies in the target domain. Second, the relationship between elements in the source domain is mapped to the relationship in the target domain. Finally, the features of the source domain are mapped to the features of the target domain.

For example, when we say that a bridge has the function of a gate, we are filling a vacancy in the target domain. We can also say that the bridge is like a door that connects the real world with the imaginary world. This is an example of mapping the characteristics of the source domain (door) to the target domain (bridge).

Similarly, when we say that a train is the carrier of time, we are mapping the characteristic of the source domain (carrier) to the target domain (train). In this case, time needs a carrier that is illusory and elusive, and the train serves as a metaphorical carrier that transports us through time.

By analyzing the images of pigs, trains, bridges, water, animals, Totoro, and Chihiro, we now have a full understanding of Miyazaki's inspiration for these images and the psychological state he was in when he created these works. He was deeply influenced by his time, his people, and his country. We find that the formation of a metaphor is not accidental but a process.

Folk customs, national culture, and Shinto culture are all related to the generation of metaphors. Folk customs, as a folk heritage culture, are deeply rooted in the soul of human beings and are closely related to people's clothing, food, shelter, and transportation. They are an essential and important part of people's daily lives. Miyazaki's humanism, anti-war ideas, environmentalism, growth themes, view of nature, and the connotation of national culture behind him are vividly presented in these images he chose. Metaphors are based on bodily experience, and they are the product of his body, mind, and life experience.

5. Conclusion

Through the cognitive interpretation of the image metaphor in Miyazaki's works, we can better understand the connotation of the images in his works. This explains the enduring popularity of his works worldwide and proves the rationality of the cognitive metaphor (Xiong, 2013). This paper analyzes the works of Miyazaki from the perspective of cognitive linguistics and deconstructs its image aesthetics. Metaphor, as a cognitive tool, is a powerful assistant in analyzing and interpreting literary works and films. Its role in arousing the audience's resonance and constructing the emotional and psychological mechanism is essential.

In fact, the greatest inspiration in his works comes from life. He extended and developed the concept of life and applied it to his works, so that all objects in his works have metaphorical meanings. This is also the reason why the style of his works is elegant, the sentimental tone is harmonious, and the philosophy is profound. People of

different ages can find answers to their own questions. The combination of exquisite painting skills, sensitive color selection, rich life experience, skilled folk knowledge, and understanding of people's cognitive habits, along with the music composed by the famous composer Joe Hisaishi, makes up the great works of Miyazaki. Metaphor is a kind of cultural symbol in essence and has profound cultural connotation. The cognitive metaphor is to understand and experience one thing with another thing. Metaphor is not only a rhetorical device, but also a cognitive style, which is incisively reflected in this thesis. Different cognitive styles lead to different ways of thinking and behavior. Metaphor is expressive, and it can easily turn complex cognitive expressions into easy-to-understand ones. Lakoff and Johnson pinpoint that the concepts formed through metaphorical cognitive styles are systematic. The linguistic examples used to express these concepts are also systematic. Metaphors with the same target domain and related metaphors together constitute the conceptual metaphorical system.

The coherence of metaphors and their linguistic examples, as well as the locality of metaphorical mapping, are important features of the interdependence between the two sides of the systematic integration of metaphors. This includes the mapping of similar features. Among the many images in his works, each image is a metaphorical mapping. We know that the external system of metaphor means that metaphors with the same target domain and other related metaphors, which are helpful to construct the target domain, together constituting the metaphorical system, mapping the features of different source domains to the target domain, and completing the construction and understanding of the target domain together. At this point, the writers of this article have analyzed the internal systematicness of metaphor at a large number of conceptual levels.

Metaphor is rooted in experience and varies from one cognitive experience to another. Basic metaphors come directly from our initial physical experience. So Miyazaki's personal life experience has a direct impact on the formation of a metaphor. Metaphorical language is only a superficial expression of conceptual metaphor. The conceptual structure of metaphor is very important and systematic. So metaphor is not a linguistic structure but a conceptual structure.

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