

Example of king kong (1933) movie review

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Technological Analysis of King Kong (1993)

Eighty years have passed since Merian C. Cooper's original, black and white version of King Kong was released in cinema. Many new technologies were presented in King Kong that made it possible to tell the chest-thumping story of a gigantic gorilla that goes on a rampage through New York City after being brought there from an island inhabited by dinosaurs. As a visionary, Merian C. Cooper, the director of the original King Kong dared to face a series of technological challenges to create a film way ahead of its time. King Kong is an epitome of the director's intense interest in technology. The purpose of this paper is to explore and analyze the technological challenges that the director faced while creating the 1993 version of King Kong, and the renowned technological advances that were made by this iconic film.

It would not be wrong to call King Kong a revolutionary film. An example was set by King Kong for all the adventure/horror/monster films that have been made in Hollywood after it. It would not be an overstatement to claim that traces of King Kong could be found in numerous movies that followed it.

Watching the black and white 1993 version of the film would not be an exciting idea for many people today because they are just not able to recognize the innovative quality of the film in present times. This is why the true artistic and technological merits of the film cannot be analyzed or judged unless the predominant technologies available at the time this film was produced in the 1930s are taken into consideration. For instance, the stop-motion animation by Willis O'Brien was an outstanding accomplishment at the time.

Willis O'Brien's animation work was highly appreciated. Willis O'Brien was

also the Special Effects Animator in Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Lost World." What adds further merit to all the special effects work that O'Brien has done over the years is the fact that in 1925 was year that marked of the birth of technology in Hollywood. When it came to special effects, devising the concept of King Kong was initially a significant challenge for Cooper. He precluded the idea using an actual gorilla for the film, but finding a believable alternative seemed almost impossible at the time. Of course, that was until Cooper met O'Brien, who had already made a name for himself as a stop-motion animation genius. Thus, Cooper got some of the most refined solutions to all the technical challenges that were a hurdle and thus, the making of King Kong proceeded.

Ernest B. Schoedsack, also the director of the film, then proceeded to shoot some test footage of three 18" high model gorillas against a miniature Skull Island and Manhattan, and the footage impressed RKO Radio Pictures so much that they funded the film, becoming the film's distributor. In the 1993 version, King Kong was portrayed as a terrifying man eating monster, a humanoid with a gorilla like appearance. Marcel Delgado was the one who built and sculpted the metal armatures that were used as the animated models for the gigantic gorilla and the dinosaurs, and Willis O'Brien then animated them. One of the things that influenced O'Brien for King Kong was the dinosaur animations he had created for The Lost World.

O'Brien's method of animation was called stop-motion because he would shoot each frame individually, adjusting the models for every frame so that the models appeared in motion when they were put together.

The technological facet of King Kong that saw the most innovation was the

film's cinematography, which not only included the miniature models that were used for animation but rear-projection and trick photography as well. The actors and footage of the animations were displayed in the same scenes by using rear-projection, and the size of the King Kong animation was augmented by using trick photography. One particular scene where miniature rear projection technique was used in the film was when Kong's hand is shown in the cave that Driscoll takes refuge in toward the end of the film. The technical splendor of this scene is flawless; perhaps it stands out from the rest of the film. Another 7" wide animatronic model was used for King Kong's head, whenever his face was to be shown up close. The combination of these techniques is what brought the dinosaurs and King Kong to life in the film in the most spectacular way.

The rich detail with which the character of Kong is portrayed is another momentous accomplishment made by the film. Although Kong is certainly a primate, but the anger, desire and melancholy displayed by him was exactly how they are displayed by human beings. The use of stop-animation technique to create these detailed facial expressions were certainly a challenge and quite wearisome. Yet, it was done flawlessly. The most impressive scene in the film is definitely the scene in which the viewers see Kong was the first time on the screen. The visual on the screen is perfectly complimented by Kong's growls and grunts. King Kong was indeed a challenging project, but it was executed so flawlessly that it has become a Hollywood classic (White, 2006).

It is because of these technological advancements that no matter how many times viewers watch this film, it never gets old and never disappoints, as

long as the year in which it was produced is taken into account. Today, the special effects that are a part of the film might seem prehistoric and ragged, but the emotional weight that is carried by the film remained unmatched by model work and CGI trickery. Apart from the technological advances that the film made, even the Max Steiner's use of leitmotifs in the film's musical score was way ahead of its time. In fact, King Kong was the very first major Hollywood film that did not simply have background music but an actual thematic score and Murray Spivak's sound effect to match it. A forty-four piece orchestra was used to make the music and three separate audio tracks were used to record it. The dramatic facets of the film are all courtesy of not only the visual effects but also to music and sound effects combined.

Despite the ground-breaking technological innovations that King Kong made that were ahead of its time, the film did not win even one Academy Award nomination. Since there was no "Special Effects" category during the 1930s, the film could have won all of the awards. Perhaps the members of the Academy did not decide to award the film because of the popular acclaim it garnered and the violence depicted in the film. Nonetheless, King Kong (1933) remains a classic, a masterpiece of technology, which was ahead of the time in which it was produced.

Works Cited

Cooper, Merian C., dir. King Kong. Dir. Ernest B. Schoedsack. 1933. Film. 8 Dec 2012. .