

On *Ghost in the Shell* (2017)

The 2017 live action remake of a legendary Japanese animation *Ghost in the Shell* (1995) makes it clear the negative effect that the market economy can bring to cinema. Co-produced by Hollywood and the Chinese film industry, *Ghost in the Shell* (2017) is none but a display of unimaginative special effects and unnecessary plots that are all but formulaic while completely tearing apart the original animation that is absolutely brilliant in terms of both tranquil style and exceptionally cerebral conception.

There is something terribly absurd about Hollywood's mindset that a film needs a story and plots. Hollywood simply seems incapable of tapping into the true power of cinema (for details on the 'power of cinema' please revisit my previous writings). On the contrary, Hollywood uses camera and editing as means to tell stories. Because everyone likes stories to be told. Really? I don't... What's worse is that the Hollywood mindset has spread all over the world. People all over buy into the American ideology of things must have stories to sell. Everyone's an American, and we say we value our cultures. How pathetic is that? What's more pathetic is that many view cinema as a mean to entertain themselves – to see something in order to relax themselves after a week of hard work in their offices or wherever doing whatever. Are we really that weak? Dystopia is not future – it is present. Just look at yourself.

That is what the original *Ghost in the Shell* so brilliantly portrays – that dystopia is a present phenomenon. But the remake treats the film as another one of those “will the future be like this?” “what's the meaning of life?” I really don't understand why people are so intrigued by the purpose of life. Do they not know the answer? There are two things in life that we are absolutely sure of – we were born and we will die. So, naturally, the purpose of life is to die. If the purpose of life is to die, then life is simply the process of dying. Please consider this truth and don't waste your time in philosophy. Time is more valuable than we think. Why? Because time is only thing that does not change in this universe. This isn't philosophy – it's the truth. Funny thing about philosophy is that it seeks for truth and ironically deviates from it.

Anyways, let's get back to the film. The original reflects the present (well, the 1990s present) while having a futuristic look. Present phenomenon is our ghost while dystopian visual look is just a shell that hides what's true. The remake is all about dystopia – the shell, which is just a way to say that it's shallow. I can imagine that the director (his name not even worth mentioning here) is someone who spits out a gum right after its sweetness had been all sucked out – he consumes the sugar but does not care about the essence of the gum. Then what is the essence of cinema? It's time. As well as that of a gum.

The remake is a great success in terms of being a co-production between Hollywood and the Chinese film industry. They're doing well. But China has too many people and its market therefore forces cinema to make too many compromises. I'm sure the people who made the remake are all considered 'professionals' in the film industry. But what's the point of being a professional when your work is so disrespectful to cinema? Well, professionalism actually has nothing to do with making true cinema. A (pro)fessional is simply someone who is expected to execute a (pro)cedure, and a (pro)cedure is none but a (pro)gram that is designed to (pro)duce a (pro)duct.

So did I enjoy the product? No.

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2017/04/09