

A Chinese Odyssey to the West from the perspective of postmodernism: narrative, symbol and cultural deconstruction

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Abstract:

Based on the post-modernism theory, this thesis makes an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the movie Journey to the West. Through the analysis of the narrative structure, role shaping, cultural symbols and other aspects of the film, the uniqueness of the film from the perspective of post-modernism is revealed [1]. The paper adopts a variety of research methods, including literature research, investigation, observation, etc., to ensure the comprehensiveness and depth of the research. The research results show that A Chinese Odyssey to the West presents complex and diverse cultural connotations from the perspective of postmodernism, profoundly reflecting the changes and challenges of contemporary social culture.

Keywords: Postmodernism, A Chinese Odyssey, narrative, role, cultural symbols

1. Introduction

As a classic work in the Chinese film world, Journey to the West is not only praised in the plot and performance, but also attracted much attention for its unique narrative style and cultural symbols. However, there is more to the film than that. This thesis takes the post-modernism perspective as the starting point, and makes an in-depth analysis and interpretation of “A Chinese Odyssey to the West” in order to reveal its cultural significance and post-modernist elements.

2. Overview of postmodernism theory

Postmodernism is a cultural trend that arose in the late 20th century [2], which has carried on a critical reflection and expansion of modernist theories. Postmodernism emphasizes pluralism, relativism and uncertainty, challenging traditional rationalism and modern values [3]. Its core features include the fragmentation of narrative, the reconstruction of cultural symbols, and the suspicion and deconstruction of authority.

3. Narrative structure of A Chinese Odyssey to the West

3.1 Nonlinear narrative

A Chinese Odyssey to the West adopts a non-linear narrative structure, which breaks the linear logic of traditional narrative and presents a multi-dimensional narrative ex-

perience through the jump of time span and the fragmentation of character memory. From the very beginning, the film shows the love story between the modern character Xu Xian and the ancient Lady Bai [4], and this misplaced narrative allows the audience to feel the complexity of time and space in the plot.

In the film, Xu Xian’s character turn and the complex fate of Lady White constitute the main line of the narrative. From an ordinary scholar, Xu Xian gradually grew into a hero with responsibility and courage because of his encounter with Lady White. The White Lady, on the other hand, is a character with both mysterious power and human warmth. This narrative approach not only shows the development of the main story, but also presents the complexity and contradictions of the characters’ inner hearts through the characters’ memories and emotional fragments.

3.2 Inversion and repetition

The reversal and repetition elements in the film enrich the plot, increase the audience’s aesthetic interest, and also reflect the postmodernism’s challenge and re-examination of narrative norms. The encounter and separation between Xu Xian and the White Lady, and the recurring reincarnation fate, make the audience have a deeper reflection on the story plot and the fate of the characters. This reversal and repetition not only makes the story more dramatic, but also echoes the postmodernist recognition of the diversity of time, fate and individual experience.

4. Character development in A Chinese Odyssey

4.1 Deconstruction of traditional hero images

The film deconstructs the traditional hero image, breaks the mythic image of traditional heroism and presents a more real and complex human nature through the humanized depiction and emotional expression of the role. For example, Sun Wukong is no longer the traditional hero with vast powers and great strength, but a complex character with emotions and mistakes. In the film, Sun Wukong not only shows his heroic spirit and combat effectiveness, but also shows his desire and pursuit of love and friendship, allowing the audience to see a more three-dimensional and rich character image [5].

4.2 Multiple identities of roles

Most of the characters in the film have multiple identities and complex inner worlds, and this multiplicity not only enriches the characters

Shaping also reflects the postmodernism's concern and expansion of individual identity. For example, Lady White is both a traditional fairy figure and a female figure who pursues freedom and love. Her identity transformation and inner struggle in the film allow the audience to see humanity and emotions beyond the characters in traditional mythology. At the same time, Xu Xian's identity from an ordinary scholar to finally become a hero fighting alongside Lady Bai also shows the diversity and change of individual identity in different situations.

5. Deconstruction of cultural symbols in A Chinese Odyssey to the West

5.1 Integration of pop culture elements

The film uses a large number of pop culture elements and literature and film references, so that the audience can feel the diversity and mixed culture in the process of watching the film, breaking through the unity of traditional cultural symbols. For example, the film appears in the "Magic hand", "Tang Bohu Light autumn incense" and other classic film clips, as well as the use of pop music, make the film has a sense of The Times and cultural resonance. The integration of these cultural symbols not only shows the film creators' understanding and reflection of the popular culture at that time, but also provides a more colorful movie-watching experience for the audience.

5.2 Reconstruction of history and myth

The film reinterprets history and myth through humor and satire, challenges traditional authority and power structure, and embodies postmodernism's suspicion and sub-

version of authority. For example, the re-portrayal of historical figures such as the Tang Monk and the White Bone Essence in the film makes these traditional images more humanized and ironic. At the same time, the film makes fun of the emotional expression and behavior of the characters in the traditional mythology, and also allows the audience to think about the nature of history and mythology in laughter.

6. Cultural significance from the perspective of postmodernism

The cultural significance of "A Chinese Odyssey to the West" from the perspective of postmodernism is rich and profound. First of all, the narrative structure and characterization of the film break through the traditional norms of literature and film and television, showing a more diverse and three-dimensional way of expression. Secondly, the use and reconstruction of cultural symbols in the film let the audience feel the review and criticism of the social culture at that time in the laughter. Finally, the film's ridicule and deconstruction of history and myth make the traditional story glow with new vitality in the new era background, but also let the audience have a more profound thinking about history and myth.

7. Expression of love

In traditional literature and art works, love is often depicted as an idealized and eternal existence, emphasizing the depth of emotion and loyalty. However, in A Chinese Odyssey to the West, the presentation of love is more complex and realistic. For example, the relationship between the heroine Bai Jingjing and Tang Monk is not smooth sailing, but has experienced many twists and turns and tests. This realistic depiction of love reflects the challenge of postmodernism to the traditional view of love and emphasizes the diversity and change of emotions.

8. Growth and individual Destiny

Traditional literary and artistic works usually emphasize the protagonist's growth process and the casting of fate, and emphasize the inevitability of fate and subjective initiative. However, in "A Chinese Odyssey to the West", the protagonist Sun Wukong's growth process and fate trajectory show more randomness and chaos. He has experienced many reincarnations and incarnations, and the direction of fate is not completely controlled by individual efforts, but is affected by various factors. This deconstruction of growth and fate reflects the postmodernism's questioning and challenge to traditional concepts.

9. The change of life and death view

In traditional literature and art works, life and death are often understood as the binary opposition of opposites, emphasizing the preciousness of life and the finality of death. However, in *A Chinese Odyssey to the West*, the boundaries of life and death become blurred and relative, and the protagonists experience multiple reincarnations and incarnations, which is not an absolute end, but an eternal cycle. This change in the view of life and death reflects the postmodernism's subversion and reconstruction of traditional ideas, and emphasizes the continuity and complexity of life.

10. Mission and significance

In traditional literary and artistic works, the hero is often entrusted with a lofty mission or responsibility, emphasizing the meaning and value of existence. However, in *A Chinese Odyssey to the West*, the protagonists' attitudes toward their mission are more complex and diverse. They experience doubts and questions about their mission, while also exploring the multiple possibilities and choices of individual existence. This exploration of the mission and the meaning of existence reflects the challenge and rethinking of the traditional concept of postmodernism, and emphasizes the diversity and relativity of existence.

Through the interpretation of love, growth, life and death, destiny and mission in "*A Chinese Odyssey to the West*", we can better understand the challenge and subversion of the traditional literary works by postmodernism. Works from the perspective of postmodernism are no longer limited to traditional values and narrative forms, but present more diversified and open ways of cultural expression. This novel artistic expression not only enriches the connotation and form of literary works, but also is more easily accepted and understood by contemporary audiences.

11. Conclusions and Prospects

As a film with profound cultural connotation, "*A Chinese Odyssey to the West*" presents rich and diversified cultural significance through post-modernism perspective. The research of this thesis not only helps to deepen the understanding of the film, but also expands the application of postmodernism in the film art, and provides a new idea and perspective for the research of related fields. Through the in-depth interpretation of the postmodernist perspective of *A Chinese Odyssey*, we not only have a better understanding of the cultural significance and artistic expression of this classic film, but also expand the application of postmodernist theory in literature and film and television works. The movie "*A Chinese Odyssey to the West*" shows the characteristics of postmodernism in shaping characters, constructing narrative structure and using cultural symbols, which brings the audience a unique and rich viewing experience. At the same time, the film also inadvertently reflected the characteristics and challenges of the social culture at that time, and had a profound impact and inspiration on the audience.

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