

An analysis of the movie "Swimming All the Way to the Blue Sea" from the perspective of film semiotics

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Abstract

"Swimming until the sea turns blue" is a documentary directed by Jia Zhangke, the sixth generation director of China. It uses literature to review the migration history of Chinese people from land to the vast world. The film can be seen as the use of memory resources to build nostalgia and write a spiritual history of Chinese people in the rapid development of modernization in the last century. This article analyzes the film "Swimming All the Way to the Blue Sea" from the perspective of film semiotics, interprets the director's creative intention, reveals the deep cultural connotations contained in the film, and enhances our understanding of the film's thematic ideas and cultural values.

Keywords

Film Semiotics; Swim until the sea turns blue; Rural Literature.

1. Discussions on Film Semiotics

Semiotics theory holds that movies, as a special symbol system, convey specific information and meaning through symbolic elements such as visuals, music, and dialogue. In recent years, more and more scholars have begun to use semiotic theory to conduct in-depth analysis of movies. For example, in the first stage of film semiotics, scholars mainly focused on the characteristics of film symbols, the classification of symbols, and narrative structures, exploring how films convey information through the combination and arrangement of symbols. In the second stage of film semiotics, Christian Metz integrated psychoanalytic and ideological criticism methods into film semiotics, exploring the relationship between film machines and audience psychological structures, further expanding the research field of film semiotics. In the 1960s, Metz introduced the methods of structuralist linguistics into film studies, opening the door to semiotic research in film. The study of world film theory shifted from traditional research on the nature of film to the study of film culture. Maitz believes that movies are a symbolic system with certain conventions, and the creation of movies has a socially recognized and traceable program. Film language is different from natural language, but the essence of film symbol system is similar to that of language symbol system. The scientific tool for studying film is semiotics, and its research focus should be on connotation and extension.

The theory of film semiotics is influenced by structuralist linguistics and often utilizes the research of structuralist linguistics Research methods, analyze the structural form of film works. For example, language and speech proposed by structuralist linguistics

The concepts of combination and clustering, signifier and signified, extension and connotation have all been applied to film research. Film semiotics is a theoretical discipline that specializes in the study of visual symbols and their semantic rules. Broadly speaking, film visual symbols include visual and auditory symbols in images. The visual elements of an image include people, scenery, objects, light, and color, with people being the center of the visual elements. Movies directly appeal to the audience's vision through specific images, especially character images. At the same time, the unique form of sound is used to render the visual impact and construct the integrity of the film. Therefore, supported by the theoretical background of film semiotics,

analyzing the film "Swimming All the Way to the Blue Sea" from both visual and auditory perspectives can provide a deeper understanding of the signifier and signified that appear in the film, as well as the symbolism and meaning conveyed.

2. The Application of Visual Symbols in Films

2.1. Character symbols

1. Identity as a literary writer

Swimming Until the Sea Turns Blue "is another film directed by Jia Zhangke after" Legend of the Sea "in 2010 Oral style documentary film, its filming originated from Lv, founded by Jia Zhangke in Jiajiazhuang, Fenyang, Shanxi in 2019 Liang Literature Season. The characters depicted in the film are all four who have experience in rural life or small town life Literary writers: Ma Feng, Jia Pingwa, Yu Hua, and Liang Hong. The narrator chosen by Jia Zhangke in the film is a writer Individuals or those associated with the author, to recall their life in their rural homeland. Jia Zhangke said, 'In the 1950s,...' Jia Pingwa, born in the 1960s, Yu Hua, born in the 1970s, and Liang Hong, born in the 1970s, use relay storytelling to tell the story.

The most important years in their growth process are connected by the experiences of various individuals from 1949 to the present. This is a social transformation history spanning 70 years of New China, a dialogue between time and space, and an ongoing process. Same as the content of literary creation. Villagers from Jiajiazhuang and Ma Feng's daughter reminisce about Ma Feng's journey to Yan'an to study, live, and fall in love Life and the creative life after returning home allow us to appreciate the difficult life in the countryside in the past and the happiness and health of the people today; Jia Pingwa talked about his father's political influence, his work in his youth, and his freedom in the countryside Unrestricted leisure time; Yu Hua humorously tells the story of his childhood life with his parents in Haiyan, And the experience of giving up the dental profession and immersing oneself in the writing wave; Liang Hong talked about her internal emotions with her father, mother, and sister's family, touching the audience with her personal life experiences. Jia Zhangke composed 18 chapters through these stories, showing us the resonance of ordinary people in each era with them. With their unique personal feelings and family emotional shackles, these writers show us a "rural past" that belongs only to our Chinese people.

2. Ordinary person identity

Swimming Until the Sea Turns Blue "not only focuses on the author's narration, but also includes other characters in the film, Appearing in the camera, for example, scenes of elderly people eating in restaurants in nursing homes, hurried travelers on trains with tired faces, foreigners with different expressions at the entrance of Xi'an Railway Station, and leisurely elderly people sitting together playing cards on the roadside... These large amounts of street photography materials with a sense of age interweave with the author's narrative scenes. These shots authentically restore the daily life of ordinary people and also have the "rough" style of Jia Zhangke's film aesthetics. In the film, these most lively scenes present the most authentic appearance of ordinary people in this era, a vast and complex group composed of countless individual micro lives. The group images of these faces and individuals are the protagonists in the writer's writing. The fate of the characters in the story written by the writer is the abbreviation of every real society, which alternates between the writer and the real scene, presenting a strong sense of documentary beauty and humanistic care for social reality.

There are also some special scenes in the film: people working hard in the fields, ordinary people on the roadside People and those related to the four writers in the movie read poems and essays in the fields and trees, with the interweaving of these scenes, It emphasizes the undifferentiated nature of literature, transforming it from abstract words to concrete language

and emotions. The 18 chapters are interconnected according to the content of the four writers, while the appearance of other character symbols tightly intertwines the relationship between the writers and their homeland, forming an inseparable growth chain. It is the appearance of these ordinary people's character symbols that truly restores the atmosphere of rural homeland to the film, reflecting the most simple local sentiment in literature and film.

2.2. Natural symbols

1. The symbol of water

As the title of the film "Swimming Until the Sea Turns Blue" suggests, there are multiple scenes related to water in the film Content. For example, in the chapter of Ma Feng, villagers describe how Ma Feng led everyone to "use water to treat alkali" and ultimately led to the success of Jiajiazhuang Gradually becoming wealthy; Jia Pingwa said, 'My hometown is a land of blood.'; The interview location for Liang Hong's son is in a village.

On the riverbank; When Yu Hua was a child, the sea he saw was yellow. When he swam, he wanted to swim until the water turned blue. At this moment, the movie camera showed Yu Hua standing by the seaside. In the oral interviews of the four writers, they all mentioned to some extent the memories related to water in their hometowns, which shows that the water in their hometowns has become a part of their subtle expression. Water has been a symbol of the god of fertility and abundance since ancient times. Water can break the existence between matter and consciousness, and is a spiritual existence. At the same time, water has all forms, both able to shape and dissolve everything, and it best embodies human characteristics in water. In the film, the author's creative sources mostly come from their hometown, where the only unchanging memory is water. It can be said that the water of our hometown has long been deeply intertwined with our blood, and water is the unity of various life and fertility centers. For example, there is a mother river that nurtures local production and life in every place. Water is like an existence that connects the homeland and the individual, a presence for travelers far away to express their homesickness.

2. Land and Plants

Land is another core natural symbol in the film, carrying the memories, emotions, and Identity recognition. In movies, land is not only the background for writers' growth, but also their emotional sustenance and spiritual destination. In Jia Pingwa's narration, he deeply recalled the fields, rivers, and mountains of his hometown, which formed the background of his upbringing and memories. He described his childhood experiences of working on the land, which not only exercised his physical fitness but also shaped his character and values. Plants symbolize life, hope, and growth in the film. They represent the vitality and longing for the future, while also implying thoughts on the meaning and value of life. The growth and changes of plants also reflect the passage of time and the changes in history, which are closely linked to the personal experiences and emotions of writers. In Liang Hong's narration, she described the fields and orchards in her hometown of Rang County, Henan Province, which were filled with various trees and flowers. She recounted her childhood experiences of playing and picking fruits in the orchard, which made her feel the beauty of life and the gifts of nature. In addition, the film also depicts writers walking in the fields, observing plants, and farmers reading poetry and prose in harvested wheat fields, all of which embody the symbolic significance of plants as life and hope.

3. The Application of Auditory Symbols in Films

3.1. Dialect symbols

Dialects, as variations of language, reflect the inherent ways of thinking and living conditions of a regional population Endorsement of regional culture. After the combination of dialects and movies, dialects have a unique sound form and their own culture.

The logo brings deep meaning and unique charm to the movie. Dialects are a unique "documentary beauty" in Jia Zhangke's films, and the film "Swimming Until the Sea Turns Blue" is no exception, continuing the manifestation of dialect symbols. The Shanxi dialect spoken by the villagers of Jiajia Village and the Shaanxi dialect spoken by Jia Pingwa both have strong local dialects. When interviewing Liang Hong's son, he was asked to introduce himself. Liang Hong's son spoke standard Mandarin: "I was born in Henan, grew up in Beijing, studied at Renmin University Affiliated High School, and my hobby is physics..." At this time, the director asked him to introduce himself in Henan dialect, but he forgot. So the director deliberately interrupted his son's oral narration and asked Liang Hong to teach him how to speak Henan dialect. The appearance of this scene is not only a transmission of the local dialect, but also a process of establishing and tracing the roots between Liang Hong's son and his own place of blood. At the same time, the emergence of dialect symbols is crucial for presenting the inner emotions, identity recognition, and cultural differences of the characters in the film.

All of them play important roles. The narrator and the readers of poetry and prose in the film are not speaking in dialect, but speak language, but dialects speak of themselves, recall themselves, and trace themselves. The narration of dialects in the film.

The alternation with hometown scenes brings us a manifestation of the tension between language and life. Meanwhile, different the collision between dialects, the conversion of the speaker's language, and the singing of opera in dialects are all symbols of dialects.

The space referred to in the film has been infinitely expanded. The dialect symbols used in the film are like a bond that connects characters, stories, and local customs, showcasing not only the local customs and traditions but also the storytelling. The character style of the person further explores the foundation of the local sentiment reflected in the dialect symbols in the movie.

3.2. Music symbols

Music is an art form that, as a symbol, can tell stories, express emotions, and captivate people resonance. In movies, it is one of the important ways to enhance artistic appeal and expressiveness, which can increase the film's impact. The semantic function in. The background music of the narrator in the film is often soothing and calm, allowing us to calm down and listen carefully to the stories inside; The passionate music points of writers expressing their opinions during the literary season complement the diverse viewpoints of literati; The background music played in the chapter about Ma Feng is 'People Say Shanxi Has Beautiful Scenery'; The background music played in the train camera is 'time to say goodbye', which perfectly fits the mood of pedestrians. These music serve to create an atmosphere and suggest the psychology and emotions of the characters in the film. At the same time, there are various opera tunes in the film. Jin Opera, Qin Opera, Yue Opera and Yu Opera correspond to the scenes of Ma Feng, Jia Pingwa, Yu Hua and Liang Hong in their respective chapters. The representative areas of these operas are also the hometown associated with the four writers. At the same time, these operas performed in dialects and the use of dialects by writers as narrators mutually confirm that writers are both "listeners" and "singers", indicating the inheritance function of artistic media in terms of survival experience and national memory.

4. Conclusion

Peter Warren, in his book "The Symbols and Meanings of Cinema," follows the principle of "pictographic symbols indicative symbols Using the system of "symbolic symbols" to study film semiotics, and categorizing documentary films as a whole into the "indicative symbol" system Unified. Director Jia Zhangke also said, 'I hope this movie will be like an index, reminding everyone of some memories.' past. Like a literary memorandum or a casual note, it records the cultural context and society Psychological and temporal characteristics enable us to redirect our focus back to the starting point at certain moments in the future and provide significant feedback

Poetry and contemplation The director presents the concept of family and country behind the audiovisual symbols in the documentary, in order to convey the meaning of the documentary The construction of the meaning of homesickness also gives this film a profound cultural connotation. At the end of the film, Yu Hua narrated it orally ending a swimming experience: When he was young, he saw in books that the seawater was blue, but living in the seawater he saw by the seaside was always murky yellow, so he tried to swim deeper into the sea, I want to swim until the sea turns blue. This poetic and romantic sentence seems to be saying that we are in the midst of a long history In the river, everyone swims forward with the current of the times, but always struggles to swim towards a new world. People constantly strive and struggle throughout their lives, trying to break free from the turbidity and swim towards the beautiful blue river of their dreams, towards that ideal utopia.

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