

A Study on Artistic Expression of Aesthetics of Gathering and Depart in the Film Version of the Painted Skin

Zhang Li

Sishui Senior Middle School, Jining, 272000, China.

584447518@qq.com

Abstract

The Painted Skin is one of the well-known short stories of Strange Tales of a Lonely Studio written by Pu Songling -a famous writer in Qing Dynasty. The Painted Skin, describing a romantic tale between human and ghost, is a classical work which is often adapted into films or TV series. Basing on brave innovation, the images in the filmed Painted Skin shows the cultural and spiritual inheriting from the original theme and the Chinese literature. Besides, these images, adapted from modern perspective, achieved artistic sublimation through multi-angle performance. By converting the main characters, the film pursuits demonstration of Chinese marital ethnics, thus inheriting and spreading the Chinese traditional civilization. The happy ending of the film which achieves article aesthetics by integrating modern values into the film's theme, is converted to cater for audience and lay a foundation for filming more great works in the future.

Keywords

Painted Skin; Adaptation; Film and television expression; Artistic aesthetics.

1. Introduction

The Strange Tales of a Lonely Studio, written by Pu Songling - a famous writer in Qing Dynasty, brings the Chinese mythological literature to a new high. The Painted Skin is a successful example that converted from Chinese classics. From perspectives of modern audience, the director makes some innovative renovations and creations by adding new plots. The filmed Painted Skin reserves the original story while adding new factors that caters for contemporary audience. By the means of radiation, the movie demonstrates contemporary aesthetics[1-2].

In conclusion, the movie - the Painted Skin - not only inherits and spread the traditional Chinese civilization but also creates and sublimates the original texts.

2. Artistic appeals of the adapted major characters

Chinese mythological literature has a long history, and Pu Songling's The Strange Tales of a Lonely Studio is the most exciting one. By describing a tale between a man and a fox demon, Pu Songling satirizes the disordered and corrupted society of the late Qing Dynasty and expresses his resentment about the dark time. However, the movie - the Painted Skin, directed by Chen Jiashang, features relationship adjustment among major characters. Focusing on the development of the major characters' romantic affairs, the movie displays the artistic appeals of the mythological story in a more vivid and outright way. The popularity of the film can attribute to the follow reasons: first, the ups and downs of the plots; second, the filmed characters of ghosts and demons make the movie more close to the audience, which is a requirement of current commercial films; third, the movie makes more room for the next creation in terms of its artistic demonstration[3-5].

First, Artistic Demonstration of the Leading Male Character's contradicted psychological activities. Mr. Wang, the leading male character of the Painted Skin, is a metaphor of some people who are easily bewildered by superficial images and who cannot tell truth from the fakes. On the contrary, Mr. Wang in the movie is converted to be positive image - a brave general who is bewitched by a fox demon named Xiao Wei, but eventually realized his error and return to his beloved wife. The complicated psychological activities that he loves his wife but is addicted to Xiao Wei's beauty of the hero are the result of the artistic adjustments. At the end of the movie, Wang said, if, he (his wife) is a demon, I should have killed her to fulfill my responsibility, but she is my beloved wife, how can do it? From this sentence, we can find the inner contradiction of Wang, and it is this kind of self-contradiction that shows the charms of this movie[6-8].

Second, Artistic Demonstration of Chen - the Wife of Mr. Wang. Under description of Pu Songling in the Strange Tales of a Lonely Studio, Chen performs in accordance with the Confucius guiding principles for marriage that being absolutely loyal to husbands. However, the character in the movie tends to display Chen's determination and brave on the basis of loyalty. Through decipherments from multi-perspectives, the movie makes lots of innovations of the original text. In the movie, Chen resolutely turns to Pang Yong and Xia Bing who are knights for driving the fox demon away when she finds Xiao Wei's (the fox demon) malice even if this is against his husband's willingness. It is Chen's brave and loyalty that makes this character charming. When she is slandered to be a demon, Chen resolutely choose to sacrifice herself to save more people. This spirit of love surpassing all makes Chen's loyalty and brave more outstanding and profound. In the film, Chen who is elegance and brave, is describes as a desired woman that everyman likes in the feudal society.

Last, Artistic Demonstration of the Fox Demon - Xiao Wei. The Fox demon in the Painted Skin was describes by Pu Songling as following: under the beautiful appearance, there is a dark and ugly soul. In Pu Songling's tale, the fox demon takes revenge against Mr. Wang. This confliction between the fox demon and Mr. Wang express the author belief that human makes error. In the movie, the story is adapted to that Xiao Wei (the fox demon) closes to General Wang aims at thanking for his saving but then fell in love with him. But, Xiao Wei's love is selfish and bold. This adaption makes Xiao Wei who surpasses the bias between human and demon, a female image who is bold and fond of freedom. Love that means to do what she can do for her lover for Xiao Wei, is just a sense of occupation. However, this kind of love can radiate the selfishness of human beings. At the end of the movie, Xiao Wei gives up her love which is an error from the very beginning and eventually understands what she really wants, with a sign that it easy to mimic other's appearance but hard to capture her soul.

3. Artistic expression of aesthetics pursuits in the filmed painted skin

The adaption of the Painted Skin in the movie is a great challenge though love remains the focus of the story. From the Aesthetical perspective, major characters, plots and the ending are adapted to cater for the emotional and value pursuits for good things of contemporary audience. This also further proves that art comes from daily life.

First, aesthetical changes of the contemporary audience proved in the adapted story.

In the original text, the devil was killed and Chen saved Wang eventually, reflecting century-long belief that good is rewarded with good, and evil with evil in Chinese civilization. The movie - the Painted Skin - converted from Pu Songling's tale, focuses on the development of romantic affairs between General Wang, Chen and Xiao Wei and integrates the characters into the plot, rendering audience lots of mental harvests. The movie end with Xiao Wei sacrifices her liner to save Wang's life. The original text and the film have two completely different aesthetical expression ways, for the former leads audiences to the major characters' inner world through different kind of writing tips while the latter pay more attentions to making visual shocks

through ending the movie with Xiao Wei (the fox demon) tears her mask down. The happy ending shows the movie's proper design of value and aesthetical pursuits, which stirs lot of appeals among audiences. This kind of aesthetical pursuit which all of the plots serves for a happy ending, demonstrates cohesion of the filmed Painted Skin.

Second, Practical meanings of the moral pursuit from the perspective of the film

Responsibility and gratitude are valued high in Chinese civilization. In original text, Wang is described as a man who is so indulging in beautiful woman that forget moral codes and eventually is killed by depriving of his heart. The description of this character is to warn people what is true value and right ethics. After Chen knows that the woman his husband brought back is a demon she suggests Wang to let her go even if this will irrigate him. Besides, after her husband was hurt by the fox demon, Chen begs the half-insane knight to save her husband at the price of being insulting. Chen's behavior demonstrates the requirements of moral codes for a wife in feudal society and moves the audience. These conversions deserve compliments from perspective of artistic design. The complicated relationship between General Wang, Chen and Xiao Wei (the fox demon) in movie also shadows attitudes towards current marital relations. Xiao Wei (the fox demon) is considered to be an intruder in modern society but in the feudal society where is normal for a man keeps several wives. Therefore, it is because Xiao Wei's identity rather than her behavior that was to be condemned at that time, because their love is a great challenge for then etiquette system. In contemporary society, Xiao Wei's love is so pure that can replace her life. The happy ending achieved by Xiao Wei's scarification is moving and appealing, but the love between Xiao Wei and Wang is unacceptable. By comparison, the film aims to advocate Chen's great and inclusive love which makes her a representative of current ethical and value pursuits.

Though people have more and more freedom in chasing real love as the society becomes increasingly open and inclusive, ethics and moralities are still the bottom-line that cannot be surpass. Hence, Wang must make a choice between his wife and the fox demon even if his is very agony to do it. This plot shadows the psychological activity of someone who lingers between inner lust and ethics in current society. This kind of adaption warn people that marriage is a combination of lust and responsibilities, thus achieving instructional functions of the film and the original text.

4. The filmed painted skin is the heritage and innovation of the traditional classics.

In Chinese civilization, the ghost culture is a hotspot since audience can seek novelties from them. Tough ghost is considered as a part of superstition, ghost culture still stirs great interests of audience to probe in such as horror films. With the Strange Stories of the Lonely Studio as a representative, an increasing number of the traditional classics that describe ghost culture are converted into films. By doing this, traditional Chinese cultures is inherited and innovated.

First, the filmed Painted Skin is a heritage of the traditional classics. By telling the story between Wang and the fox demon, Pu Songling extends his perspectives and attitude about the dark society. This story also shows human's exploration about ghost culture. Even though human don't believe and dread those ghost stories since they know ghost story belongs to superstition, they cannot deny their position in traditional Chinese cultural history. Those filmed ghost stories are very popular among audience.

After adapted into film, the major characters and endings of the Painted Skin have big difference with the original text. Xiao Wei (the fox demon) is no longer a devil image but a beauty who loves wrong person and dies for her love at last. Her pure love and beautiful appearance render audience room to enjoy the real traditional Chinese beauty. By adapting the characters and the ending, the filmed Painted Skin shows the charms of Chinese classics, thus achieving

inheritance of the traditional Chinese civilization. Therefore, the filmed Painted Skin inherits the main framework about the original work on the one hand, on the other hand, it embraces modern factors to cater for contemporary audience. By these efforts, the filmed Painted Skin creates more room for future artistic innovation.

Second, the filmed Painted Skin is an innovation of the traditional classics. By comparison, the filmed Painted Skin has bigger appealing than the original text and a better deliverance of the ethics and emotional cognition. On the one hand, the film inherits the main theme and cultural spirit; On the other hand, it innovates the story by adding modern factors into the film. By doing this, the filmed Painted Skin realized the combination between story theme and artistic and achieving sublimation.

In the film- Painted Skin, directed by Chen Jiashang, Xiao Wei (the fox demon) is no longer a devil image but a beauty who loves wrong person and dies for her love at last. Wang's contradiction that he loves his wife but can't help being lured by Xiao Wei's beautiful appearance shadows some vain persons in contemporary world. This adaption echoes view of audience. To digger deeper, the film also restores historical background and logical ties at that time, showing respects to history and culture. In the original text, Pu Songling handles the relations between male chauvinism and female rights in the feudal Chinese society with adroitness. However, the adapted happy ending in the filmed Painted Skin caters for the modern ethics and values on basis of inheriting the original characters and main theme. Otherwise, the adaption of cultural classics will have no point.

In conclusion, the characters in the filmed Painted Skin become more persuasive and appealing than the original text. This adaption demonstrates cultural development process from being restriction to freely development. The artistic adaption of the Painted Skin shows inclusiveness in modern era to better display the relationship development between Wang and Xiao Wei (the fox demon). The film-the Painted Skin demonstrates cultural images through inner cohesion and innovation, thus guiding audience to think about what is real love. With a focus on the development of major characters, the film displays a Chinese literary classics that embracing much modern factors.

References

- [1] Yang Chunyan. A Study on the Film - Painted Skin's Modern Deduction of the Strange Tales of a Lonely Studio [J]. Film Literature, 2015, (21):76-78.
- [2] Li Yanrong. A Study on Film Adaption in Painted Skin of the Strange Tales of a Lonely Studio [J]. Film Literature, 2014, (19):74-75.
- [3] Jia Zhixun, Zhang Zhihui. A Study on Film Adaption of literary classics with Painted Skin As an Example [J]. Film Literature, 2014, (11):63-64.
- [4] Pei Zheng. A Study on Film Adaption of Literary Classics – the Painted Skin [J]. Film Appraisal, 2009, (04):30-31.
- [5] Zhao Qingchao, Shi Chunxia. An Analysis of Film Adaption of the Painted Skin Under Current Backgrounds [J]. Research on Pu Songling, 2012, (04):131-137.
- [6] Wei Lili. A Study on Film Adaption of Literary Classics – the Painted Skin from the Current Acceptance Esthetics [J]. Wenyi Shenghuo, 2012, (11):152.
- [7] Zhao Qingchao, Shu Yi. Memories about the Ghosts in Films and Classics – A Thought on Inheritance and Innovations of the Film Adaption of the Painted Skin [J]. Research on Pu Songling, 2013, (04): 124-133.
- [8] Shu Yi, Yang Zhixiong. A Study on the Adapted Character of Wang's Wife- Chen, being more of a Mother than a Wife [J]. Journal of Southwest University of Science and Technology, 2018, 35(05): 30-35.