Interpretation and Symbolism: An Interpretation of Visual Anthropology

Lu ZHANG¹,a,*

¹Dalian Art College, Dalian, Liaoning Province, China

*a409420665@qq.com

*Corresponding author

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Abstract. On the basis of a review of related literature, this paper introduces the development and connotation of visual anthropology, film and television works of cultural and social relations, and from the theater on television, analysis the characteristics of both form and function, that is, some is part of the drama to show, such as the story as the core, and some of them are both the differences due to form, such as the audience and the performers at the same time is present and not present at the same time. Finally, through the perspective of interpretation and symbolic anthropology, we can understand the symbolic significance of the expression and action of the characters in the drama. The interpretation of film and television anthropology in this paper is helpful to further understand human actions and their symbolic meanings through film and television works.

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, the rapid development of science and technology has accelerated the diversification and refinement of media forms of expression. Although there are various forms of media, including print (text) media and electronic (film and television) media, the main objective is to communicate with the audience, and to communicate with the audience's life experience and cognition through specific forms of expression, thus having the educational function of aesthetic appreciation and delivering core values [1]. Many films and TV series have successfully attracted the attention of both professional and amateur audiences. These films and TV shows have unique forms of expression, which can capture the audience's emotions and emotions, and even project the audience's deep values or cultural spirit.

Film and television anthropology analyzes human's social behavior by means of film and television, which has a good explanation for explaining a certain kind of social phenomenon. Through the interpretation of the basic connotation of film and television anthropology, we can find the basic truth contained in film and television works [2]. Through the symbolic significance of film and television works, we can elaborate some phenomena of today's society, set off the social reality and attract people's attention. This helps to increase people's awareness of their own actions and those of others, as well as their understanding of the social implications of each other's actions.

Based on the above, this study will focus on the analysis and interpretation of film and television works, and interpret the social value of these works and construct their symbolic significance through the analysis of film and television anthropology.
2. The View of Visual Anthropology

One of the traditional research methods of sociocultural anthropology is written ethnography. After the invention of photography in 1845, anthropologists began to use images as a form of ethnography [1]. The first ethnographic documentary is Nanook of the North, completed by Robert Flaherty in 1922. Its subtitle is A Story of Life and Love in the Actual Arctic. It focuses on describing the warmth between people and the Nanook people living in the Arctic region when they are hungry. In the 1930s, Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson in Bali, Indonesia, edited video and audio materials taken during the study of culture and personality into documentaries. Gu (2000) believes that the term ethnographer should be limited to qualified ethnographers who have received professional training in formal academic research [3-4]. Grimshaw and Ravetz (2005) hold similar views, suggesting that the choice of materials made by video makers is related to their attitude towards the world [5].

Guindi (2004) introduced the mainstreaming process of visual materials as research objects in film and television anthropology, and pointed out that visual anthropology covers a variety of media forms, including public media and different cultural fields [6]. In his view, anthropology is the science of revealing cognitive structural processes and discovering knowledge about human beings across cultures, cultures and societies. And cultural and social relations can be visualized as part of a visual anthropology program. That is to say, film and television anthropology has taken images as the expression of ethnography in the past, and now it has also brought a wide range of video works into its research scope, including films, TV dramas, stage dramas, musical dramas and so on.

In the field of literature, different writers focus on different types of drama. Drama is a story, that is, a story or stories told through drama. This form of expression has four basic principles: (1) the development of the story according to the chronological order; (2) The development of the story must follow a certain order, that is, from the beginning to the middle to the end, must establish an orderly structure; (3) The story develops from a certain center, which makes the events of the story related to it; (4) The plot development presents a certain causal relationship or logical correlation. A play is a story that the production team (producer, director, or writer) wants to tell, performed by actors on the stage. But must play in a certain period of time (usually about two to three hours) performance is completed, and limit the stage (or lens) to render the scene, tell stories through the actor's body (medium), and attracted the audience's interest, from start to finish so than through language or text narrative story, drama is limited by time, space and medium, the trigger the audience's imagination, or it is limited by a certain degree of emotional commitment [7].

Drama has four main elements: performance time, stage, actors and audience. Therefore, for the drama, the first three main components are all based on the understanding of the story and set up, performance. A good play can touch the heart of the audience through exquisite performance. The discussion of drama should focus on the basic characteristics of drama art, drama is a kind of art presented on the scene, and it is also a medium, a culture and an art. To sum up, drama scholars agree that drama culture and art cannot be separated. They believe that the understanding of drama should focus on how to express the connotation and artistry of culture through actors [8]. Drama not only refers to the stage play, but also includes other films and TV plays with actors as the medium. This viewpoint is similar to that of film and television anthropology that cultural and social relations can be found in drama. However, from the following dramatic scholars' views on the characteristics and functions of drama, there are still some differences in the focuses of drama and film anthropology.
3. The Character and Function of Drama

As for the characteristics of drama, Gu (2014) emphasizes the collectivity of drama art, believing that drama is the result of joint performance of drama, actors, directors and music [3]. In terms of process, drama includes the collective creation of multiple artistic talents such as scriptwriter, director, actor, composer, stage art and theater design. That is to say, every drama is the painstaking efforts of many people.

As a result of this resultant force, drama has three basic characteristics that are stable and unchangeable, namely, the assumption, the oneness and the blend of time and space, all of which are indispensable. Hypothesized distinction between life and art, drama presents events that take place in imaginary situations, she thinks drama is events and generated activities in hypothetical situations [9]. The live nature determines the co-existence of the actor with the character, performer and audience. The blending of time and space indicates that the dramatic art includes space art and time art. Space is plastic arts, the overall image, etc., time refers to the plot, events, music continuation. Among them, the plastic art of the space, the whole image is concerned with aesthetics.

However, culture includes all aspects of life, and people cannot live in a vacuum without culture. Drama assumption is the difference between life and art, but after all is the common effort of all personnel involved in drama production crystallization, the arrangement of the events is the human production of the production team, therefore drama in the event is fiction, but what drama performance, can't really from the cultural context, whether it is a drama or creator of thinking, is likely to contain rich social and cultural significance. From an interpretive point of view, Uwe Flick holds that the interpretation of everyday life and science is always based on human activities and a role played by social or natural events [10]. In other words, the interpretations and attitudes we exhibit are empirically based explanations, and their source is still life. In a word, through the performance of fictional events, drama subtly lays out the ideology or values that the whole team wants to express.

On the other hand, drama must have an audience. Drama brings the audience a collective spiritual experience, reminds the audience of their code of conduct and the law of social coexistence, and communicates and dialogues with the audience [10]. The audience can experience the same emotion and will in the group. This emotional experience can sometimes be inspiring and evocative. This is the social function that drama can bring. This shows that drama, through communication and dialogue with the audience, displays its educational function of artistic aesthetics, even shapes the audience's re-interpretation of historical events, or displays the metaphorical values or cultural spirit of drama, and thus has a more collective function of cultural identity.

4. The Nature of a TV Series

Although TV drama is not a collective spiritual experience of the same place at the same time, the emotional and realistic experience in TV drama still makes the educational, aesthetic and social functions of drama exist in TV drama. We are still inspired by the process of watching a TV show, or appreciating the beauty of the pictures, or even being inspired emotionally, but not necessarily in a collective, simultaneous process. The meaning conveyed by teleplay can play the function of education [11]. The author thinks that the content of its education should depend on the content of different film and television works. All kinds of theatrical performances provide opportunities for
aesthetic education in both content and form. TV dramas must also take into account the art of space and time, which does not differ depending on whether the audience and performers exist together. Aesthetics is also one of the functions of TV dramas.

The image has another important function, that is, the image is more direct, extensive and effective than the text to convey, and easier to be understood by people from different cultures [8]. In other words, the video and audio presentation form of TV plays has a stronger communication function than words. Art is a kind of nonverbal communication of human values. We can see the similarities and differences between cultures through the world view of cultural values.

5. Aesthetic View of TV Drama

Teleplay is an important form of modern artistic expression, whose goal is to be able to attract the aesthetic expression. Art is primarily the production of a product through artificial effort, and at the same time the product can trigger our aesthetic experience [10]. Beauty is a quality shown in the characteristics of things, or a value to be pursued. That is to say, aesthetics studies beauty itself, while art studies the products that lead to beauty.

Works performed by video or sound have the following three characteristics: 1) it can only be a complete performance work after the director, the camera is connected and configured; (2) Sense of life: Compared with stage performance, film and television performance has a sense of life. (3) The director's overall grasp of the style concept: the style characteristics and performance concept of the performing arts are reflected through the director's overall thinking of the whole film. Compared with the stage play, which is a simultaneous and empty performance with immediate connection with the audience, the works performed by video or sound are processed by the director and the post-producer before the actors' performances are presented to the audience, and their performances seem more realistic in life. As for the aesthetics of teleplays, scholars have pointed out that the linear narrative structure of teleplays has aesthetic significance, and its morphological characteristics roughly include horizontal narrative structure, flat character contradictions, rolling conflict statements, and interlocking suspense settings [7].

Comprehensive the above views, whether life feelings, performance style or cross plot and narrative structure, flat character conflicts, the rolling conflict design, serial suspense, more show is artificially conscious arrangements, through these drama aesthetics technique, arrange the role of the actors, emotion and sentiment affects the audience's psychology, captures the audience's attention.

6. Interpretation and Symbolism: The View from Visual Anthropology

In 1978, Professor Whiting and his wife put forward the psycho-cultural research framework with the intention of exploring the maintenance system [11], such as livelihood type, social structure and social system, which influences the parenting style of children and influences the shaping of personality traits. Anthropological research, from the deep description of Clifford Geertz to interpretive anthropology, no longer regards human as a passive actor who responds to the stimulus of external environment, but regards human as an active responder who acts with subjective consciousness, and human's cognitive system and subjective feeling become the subject of constructing knowledge system. That is to say, after being influenced by culture, people will make behavioral responses after subjective interpretation and expression [1]. Therefore, discourse and
text become important materials to understand social and cultural phenomena and the inner world of the actor.

This paper holds that the audience is an actor with subjective consciousness who takes the initiative to take a specific response, and the group personality, emotion and emotion displayed in each society are closely related to the political system, court culture and social system at that time. Based on this point of view, many film and TV drama writers have created many novels based on their cognition of the traditional Chinese social and cultural characteristics. In other words, the various behavior patterns shown by the characters in the play can be regarded as a projection system, reflecting the cultural restriction of the structure and system of contemporary society on the interpersonal behavior pattern.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the rise of symbolic anthropology. According to this theory, human behavior and its creations have symbolic meanings, and the social and cultural phenomena formed by individuals are the symbolic system of human thought and action. For symbolic anthropologists, symbols are a shared system of meaning that can only be understood in a particular historical and sociocultural context. Marc (2009) pointed out that symbols have two characteristics: pluralistic meaning and dynamic characteristics [11].

The British social anthropologist Victor Turner was a leading figure in symbolic anthropology, and he was concerned with how symbols maintain the functioning of society. The theory of symbolic interactionism holds that people give meaning to things around them in their lives [10]. These meanings recognized by the contemporary society are transmitted to people through interpersonal interaction and internalized into their personal values and cognitive system.

As for the development of interpretive anthropology, after the Second World War, there were many studies in American anthropology. Geertz went to five small communities in northwest New Mexico to conduct comparative studies, and obtained two results: (1) comparative studies on meaning and implication; (2) Anthropological investigation turned to topics such as modernization, emerging countries and the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States. By the time of the Vietnam War, many theories had emerged in American anthropology, including psychological anthropology as described above and interpretive anthropology as described here [6].

Importantly, influenced by Paul Ricoeur, Geertz's interpretive anthropology uses texts, metaphors and symbols to interpret the meaning of people's actions embodied in cultural systems. Geertz (1973) explained that if we treat human behavior as a symbolic act, we must first understand what people do and how it happens [1]. He regarded culture as a collection of organized symbolic systems, and believed that the presentation of human culture was either presented by classical ethnography or reflected the objective existence, rather than represented the real cultural appearance, because its presentation would be interpreted by researchers on cultural phenomena and expressions.

This paper holds that the culture and thoughts presented by a TV play, to some extent, will reflect the mainstream thoughts or main problems of contemporary society, that is, to cultivate and set up viewers' thoughts, so as to give play to the educational function of TV plays. The purpose of the author thinks that, most of the audience watching TV may give priority to with entertainment or feel relaxed, therefore does not necessarily in the watch as soon as you get new ideas or change the original idea, but through the whole drama of the main shaft, may play in intangible cultural values to internalize the content.
7. Conclusion

The analysis of this study echoes the basic viewpoints of film and television anthropology, and we can find similarities in cultural and social relations from drama. From the theoretical perspective of psychological culture, literature, art, fiction or drama can be regarded as a projection system, reflecting the value cognition and social expectation of the creator, production team and audience, capturing the emotions and emotions of a large number of audiences, and even projecting the values or cultural spirit deep inside the audience.

The analysis of the present study also echo the views of symbolic anthropology, that is the symbol of human action and it contains meaning, can be used to understand the feature of human society, which is reflected by the content of the traditional Chinese social class structure and multiplicity of authoritarian nature, the diversity of emotions and interpersonal relationships, and in terms of the core value of culture, shows the justice done reflects social expectation and psychological needs.

References