

Spectacle, Landscape, and Expression: The aesthetic construction of Eastern mythology in Creation of The GodsI

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Abstract: Creation of The GodsI: Kingdom of Storms is a mythic epic film. Director Wu Ershan “sharpens a sword in nine years”, uses the top production resources to deeply cultivate the content creation, re-examines the Chinese classical culture and precious spiritual wealth, deeply expresses the connotation of Oriental traditional culture, presents the Eastern aesthetic elements in audio-visual, and reconstructs the nationalized landscape in the narrative. To build a grand and changeable age of ancient Oriental mythology.

Key words: director’s aesthetics; Oriental aesthetics; Narrative nationalized landscape

When it comes to the 2023 film summer vacation, we have to talk about the film “Creation of The GodsI: Kingdom of Storms” (hereinafter referred to as “Creation of The GodsI”). Director Wu Ershan continues his creative style of expressing individuality and following the overall aesthetics, showing the changing Yin and Shang gods era through spectacular audio-visual, and trying to return the myth with modern significance to the society through the reconstruction of the nationalized landscape in the narrative and the profound expression of the Oriental traditional cultural connotation and Oriental aesthetics. It has a positive promoting significance to the development of Chinese mythological epic films.

I. The profound expression of Oriental aesthetics

The First Part is mainly adapted from the Ming Dynasty novel *The Story of the Enthronement of Gods*. The novel tells the process of the regime change in the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, and the gods fight against each other to enthronement of gods. It is a collection of epics and myths, and contains profound traditional Chinese culture and aesthetic thoughts. On the basis of retaining the core theme, “Creation of The GodsI” reshapes the characters and plot, and naturally permeates the Chinese philosophy and metaphysical thoughts in the construction of the image.

1. The expression of Oriental mythology and traditional Chinese aesthetics

First of all, “fatalism” is an important embodiment of traditional Chinese aesthetics following the law of life. In the film, “Heaven abandons Dashang” leads to an important turning point in the story. The Shang king wants to set himself on fire to sacrifice to heaven, but he also asks for the method of immortality. The forces move around their own goals, and the conflicts become intensified.

Second, the thoughts of “benevolent government” and “people first” are important parts of traditional Chinese aesthetics. The film shows Yin Shou’s extravagance and extravagance, tyrannical despotism, to contrast the Fashzhou’s justice and rationality, Jiang Ziya’s “the world is not the world of the king of commerce, but the world of the people”, which can be described as enlightening, changing the destiny of heaven can not be violated by the people’s wishes can not be violated, shining the dazzling light of the people’s and democratic thoughts.

In addition, the “affinity for others, order for righteousness and faith” interprets the unique and two-way ethical norms of Eastern society, the aesthetics of the human world and the good way of the King’s world. In the film, the relationship between “father and son” and “king and subject” is distorted by hero worship, power and desire. In the battle of Jizhou City, Yin Shou constructs the myth of paternity to cover his ambition and desire, and uses the father-son relationship to transform the struggle for power into a just war of revenge, which makes people yearn for the return of the orthodox order of human ethics.

2. From the “ring” to the “return” of the ritual order East

“The family, the state and the world are the traditional spiritual beliefs of the Chinese nation, and the integration of the family and the country and the family and the country are the typical characteristics of traditional ethics.” The jade ring given by Ji Chang to Ji Fa appears repeatedly as a symbol, representing the orthodoxy of Xiqi’s ritual order and the yearning and expectation of relatives in the native land, which broadens and deepens the expression and construction of the theme meaning. The ring is the “return” home, but also a return to the original heart, so that Ji Fa’s faith collapsed with the fall of Yin Shou can be rebuilt. In the end, Ji Fa returns to the cultural matrix, which is a personal spiritual choice in the face of power desire, and also reflects the order reconstruction of the Yin and Shang era with the collapse of rites and music. It tries to outline the root of Chinese culture from “individual” to “small family” to “big country”, and arouses people’s emotional resonance and cultural identity in the depths of their hearts. At a deeper level, *Creation of the GodsI* revealed the source of the myth of the country and the world in traditional Chinese culture, and showed the national memory of the beginning of the spiritual civilization of China, the so-called “East of the ritual order”.

II. Audiovisual wonders shape the Oriental aesthetic world

In the modern society, the daily spectacle and the daily spectacle urge people to seek the satisfaction of psychological desire from the film art full of “video spectacle”. By integrating history with myth and legend, the First Part of the film reconstructs the narrative time and

space with the visual spectacle of Oriental aesthetic style, opening an immersive “world of the gods” for the audience.

1. Presentation of visual wonders and Eastern aesthetic elements

First of all, *Creation of the Gods I* hopes to show “the beauty of the mythical world from China”, Wu Ershan completely selects scenes from China, looking for natural landscapes that restore ancient appearance, conform to the content presentation and have Chinese temperament, and he builds a large number of real scenes. Finally, the film presents the buildings and natural scenes full of magnificent imagination, with Oriental simplicity and magical temperament on the screen. All show the magnificent and mysterious characteristics of The Times of Yin and Shang, create a surreal mythological atmosphere in the realistic space, and perfectly integrate the Chinese natural landscape, Oriental architectural aesthetics and mythological imagination.

Secondly, *Creation of the Gods I* integrates the epic characters with the legendary imagination of myth, and uses many Oriental aesthetic elements to design the makeup of the characters, bringing dramatic visual beauty. The production team uses the traditional Chinese concept of “five elements and five colors” to construct the color aesthetics of Eastern nationalities. Xiqi is good at farming, mainly representing the earth’s earthy yellow; The merchants are still white, and the clothing is white as the base, supplemented by gorgeous gold, showing the dignity; The fairy’s clothing is mainly white, the feeling of being elegant and free and easy; Shen Gongbao, a demon, wears a black robe with skeletons and other ornaments representing evil in Eastern culture. The contrast between black and white of the demon also implies “Yin and Yang” and the opposition between good and evil.

2. Film music feast and presentation of Oriental aesthetic elements

As saying “Music is a flowing building”, it means suitable film music can greatly enhance the artistic appeal. *Creation of the Gods I* takes Chinese musical elements as the core of its creation, trying to create a musical form matching the mythic epic type with a romantic style, so that the audience can experience the very distinctive Yin Shang and Chinese musical aesthetics in the movie.

First of all, the authentic musical form of Yin Shang is the part that the director first wants to express. In the “King of Shang Enthronement Ceremony”, the musicians surround and dance with the sorcerers, and Yin Shou is worshiped by the masses in his magnificent costume. In order to match the solemn, grand and mysterious scene, the director took the unique timbre of the Sheng, a traditional Chinese musical instrument, as the main timbre, and played it together with the traditional instruments such as Tubo and cymbals in the “eight-tone Instrument Classification”, coupled with the low, gritty metal human voice singing, to build a brilliant, three-dimensional and eulogitic musical presentation. Pushing the mystery and grand feeling of the ceremony to the extreme.

Secondly, by absorbing the creation ideas and methods of Wagner’s operas, which are also based on myths and heroic epics, Wu Ershan sets up the “dominant motive” for the characters in the story, weaving a whole melody line into the story, and interpreting the theme content and plot with free and full orchestral symphony and traditional Musical Instruments. To bring a film music “suite” with the grand epic legend of the East and the imagination charm of mythological heroes. The director gave Ji Fa the “hero theme” and “emotional theme”. The hero theme music is full of strength and blood. Both “Traipsing Jizhou” and “Killing the Song of the Dynasty” use horns and drums to create the atmosphere of the ancient battlefield, which is in harmony with the symphony melody and full of passionate and heroic momentum. The emotional theme music is beautiful and emotional, mostly played with orchestra and flute, melodious, clear and lingering, reflecting the rich emotions and inner world of the characters.

III. Reconstruction of the nationalized landscape in the narrative

Chen Xuguang once said: “The understanding and utilization of cultural traditions and artistic spirits should keep pace with The Times and be constantly reconstructed...” *Creation of the Gods I*, on the basis of grasping the inner relationship between the narrative core of mythological archetypes and contemporary aesthetics, reconstructs the story plot with the core of contemporary values, reshapes the characters, and breaks the bondage of mythological motifs. In the deep narrative display of the Chinese nation’s philosophy, values and aesthetics, to achieve the reconstruction of the narrative of the nationalized landscape.

1. Defamiliarization of narrative characters and narrative plots

The first part of *Feng Shen* is the overall adaptation of defamiliarization of characters. In the original, Ji Fa is the protagonist of Overthrow the Shang Dynasty, but the description is more vague, more like a tool and label to show that justice will prevail. The film builds on the story of Ji Fa’s growth as the main line, and evokes the resonance of contemporary audiences through the growth of young people. At the same time, Ji Fa’s special identity of “proton camp” is set up to lay a reasonable narrative motive for the defamiliarising treatment of the plot and character relationship in the film, and also foreshadows the conflict transformation. The audience expects to see Ji Fa’s transition from worship to rebellion against Yin Shou, a process of faith collapse and self-reconstruction, complete the growth from ignorant youth to hero, complete the presentation of character arc and the interpretation of new spiritual connotation.

As for the narrative plot, the film changes the main line of anti-tyrant into the main line of hero growth, and basically sets the plot according to the structure of three acts. The first forty minutes explain the main characters and their relationships with the battle of Jizhou City. Starting from the celebration banquet, the characters begin to develop towards their highest tasks; The second character relationship is constantly changing, Kunlun three people hold the list down the mountain to find the world total Lord, was taken away by Yin Shou list escape, four grand uncle conspiracy was arrested; The last part of the character conflict intensifies, Yin Shou’s inner desire to the peak, and finally Ji Fa kills Yin Shou and returns to Xiqi. In this setting, the contents of the original novel are effectively selected, and the epic story of Chinese mythology with epochal significance and Oriental aesthetics is told in a limited time and space.

2. Break the shackles of mythological motifs

Wu Ershan believes that mythological works have value choices and creation directions that only belong to the creation era. Therefore, he not only uses the summoning power of classic mythological texts and motifs to echo the audience's aesthetic psychological stereotypes, but also carries out a modern transformation of the value core of traditional mythological motifs to adapt to contemporary aesthetic needs.

The List of Deities has little to do with the main narrative in the original work, but the film closely links the function of this mythological motif with the theme, setting it as only the common Lord of the world can open the list of deities and save the precious treasure of the world. This turned it into a symbol of supreme power. As various camps took actions to seize power, contradictions gradually intensified, the plot kept developing, and man, God, good and evil could be reasonably woven into the story. In addition, the film combines the mythic motif of Ji Fa with the wandering motif to create a new narrative imagination space. Ji Fa is a wandering in the sense of external space for eight years, and it is also a spiritual "wandering" that does not recognize his own identity. Until he completes the disenchantment of Yin Shou and the motifs of "returning home", this double meaning of wandering comes to an end. In addition, Jiang Ziya's mythic motif is also integrated into the carnival narrative adaptation, and his solidified image of the wise man becomes "down to earth". He contract almost all the jokes of the film with Nezha and Yang Jian, bringing the audience the pleasure of comedy through the carnival scene, and accepting the national spirit and Oriental aesthetic thought contained in the text such as punishing evil and promoting good, equality of all beings in the entertainment.

3. The contemporary reconstruction of mythological heroes

Chinese mythological heroes are usually solemn and dignified images, and the film will reshape them into Oriental mythological heroes with contemporary values and creative redemption significance, bridge the boundary between myth and history, and show the modern significance and value of Oriental mythology.

First of all, the film intertextualizes the growth of the young hero with the social reality, and integrates hot modern social issues such as the family of origin and individual self-identity into the narrative, so as to gain the emotional recognition and resonance of the current audience. Secondly, Ji Fa's only act "a hero" is to kill Yin Shou, which is also the dissolution of the traditional hero image. The most important thing for him is to complete the rescue of himself. In some ways, this is more difficult than saving others. This kind of inward self-redemption is the embodiment of the unique Oriental quality of introspection and introspection, and it is also in line with the psychological and aesthetic concepts of people in contemporary society who call for spiritual return.

IV. Conclusion

Croce once said: "All history is contemporary history, or we may equally say that all retold myths are contemporary myths." With spectacular video writing as a carrier of metaphor and evoking, *Creation of the Gods I* creates a surreal "deification world" in the realistic space. Centering on the growth of heroes and the contemporary value system, it selects, integrates and reconstructs "history", "myth" and "modernity" through the image reshaping and narrative adaptation of mythological archetypes. Inject the spirit of The Times and values in the contemporary context into the narrative core of the mythological epic, show the Chinese story and national spirit based on history and reality, and complete the construction of Oriental aesthetics in the brand-new deification world.

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