

Analyze the manifestation of "new mythism" in "The White Snake: The Origin" from the perspective of new media

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Abstract. With the development of the Internet, digital technology has increasingly become one of the manifestations of imaging technology. As a relatively successful animated film, "The White Snake: The Origin" showcases the phased achievements of the continuous development of the digital age. This article takes the animated film "White Snake: The Origin" as a case and starts from the perspective of new media to explore the creative logic and cultural representation of "new mythism" in the digital age. This paper mainly focuses on three major directions. Firstly, starting from reconstructing the traditional narrative structure under new media technology, it discusses the significance of establishing a database and reconstructing myths through nonlinear narratives for the reconstruction of traditional myths. Secondly, by analyzing the participatory production model, it is explained how this model breaks the traditional myth of the single production model. Ultimately, through the translation and processing of cultural symbols, it explains how this film animation presents and expresses cultural symbols in a new way from the perspective of new media. This article ultimately explains that the essence of new mythism is the reproduction of traditional myths empowered by technology, which expands the boundaries of myths, but at the same time generates the risk of the dissolution of traditional myths.

Keywords: New media "White Snake: The Origin" New Mythism.

1. Introduction

With the digital wave sweeping across the world and the intelligentization process achieving breakthrough development, the media ecosystem has undergone unprecedented changes, and traditional creative forms and boundaries have gradually been broken through. As a typical form of film and television media, film animation has also been impacted accordingly and gradually transformed. In this contemporary context where digital technology reconstructs the paradigm of cultural production, "new mythism" is breaking through the boundaries of traditional mythology in a subversive narrative form. The animated film "The White Snake: The Origin" is based on the folk tale "The White Snake". It deconstructs the theme of "repaying kindness" with the philosophical narrative of "coexistence of humans and demons", and tells the love story of the snake demon Xiaobai and the snake catcher Xu Xuan in their previous lives. This animated film not only reconstructs its original folk tales but also builds a virtual world about real myths through diverse digital technologies. This work also combines the role of new media with "new mythism" through its modern embodiment of traditional culture. And this film also reflects and reconstructs the characteristics of "new mythism" to a certain extent in terms of narrative structure from the perspective of new media, myth production, emotional symbols, etc

2. The change of narrative structure from the perspective of New media

From ancient times to the present, there have been many media versions of folk tales created based on the cultural prototype of the "White Snake", such as operas, folk storybooks, novels, etc. However, these traditional media are all restricted by the attributes of the disseminators and communication carriers, resulting in a closed narrative structure lacking variation and being unable to reshape the mythological motif. Through the new medium form of film animation that emerged in the digital wave, "The White Snake: The Origin" integrates modern technology with traditional Eastern aesthetic

elements, thereby rewriting collective memory and demonstrating the characteristics of new mythism. These features can mainly be reflected in the changes in its narrative structure.

2.1. The construction method of the database under the nonlinear narrative structure.

Compared with traditional media forms, film and television media can reconstruct mythological motifs through the empowerment of digital technology and the narrative structure of nonlinear narratives. The animated film "White Snake: The Origin" is a typical case of a change in narrative structure driven by new media. The power coding in traditional Chinese mythology has always been isomorphic to the Confucian ritual and legal order. However, nowadays, many animated films based on myths have systematically deconstructed this symbiosis between myths and power through three strategies: disenchantment of divinity, equality in the demonic world, and reconstruction of patriarchy, leading the traditional unequal relationship towards equality or even inversion. This deconstruction is not merely a negation of tradition, but a dialectical process that takes "breaking" as "establishing". Its essence is the critical activation of the genes of traditional culture. It not only stripping away the disciplinary core of feudal ethics but also reconstructing the cultural subjectivity in line with modern values through humanized narrative, expressing the themes of deconstructing authority and pursuing justice as well as the value of humanistic spirit, thus opening up a new discourse space for the continuation of the national cultural spirit. [6] Compared with traditional written texts and most folk tales, the animated film "The White Snake: The Origin" deconstructs the ethical framework and linear narrative approach of traditional myths, and expresses mythological stories in a non-linear narrative way, making it more in line with the innovative characteristics of new myths. For instance, in the animated film "White Snake: The Origin", a "database" model in the digital age is mainly constructed through a dual-line nested pattern of retracing past life memories and the fluidity of modern emotions. This also requires the audience to collage and reproduce the information by themselves when watching. The causal chain in the traditional White Snake myth is manifested in this film animation as "Xiaoqing's obsession" and "Xiaobai's amnesia". This non-linear narrative approach also breaks the narrative logic of the traditional White Snake myth, that is, the fixed narrative sections no longer exist, and a new database model has emerged. Under this non-linear narrative structure, for the construction of the database, it also metaphorically represents the reconstruction of the traditional narrative structure in Neo-mythism, which is one of the characteristic manifestations of neo-mythism.

2.2. The new media context reconstructs the manifestation form of myths.

With the development of digital technology, media forms have undergone profound changes. The aesthetic tastes of the new generation of audiences have also changed with The Times. To meet the attention and aesthetic thresholds of Generation Z, a wave of creation combining new media has swept in, and its highly innovative methods and means have emerged as The Times require. The immersive game narrative and high-density information flow with stacked technologies in the film "White Snake: The Origin" have created a visual feast with extremely high acceptance and attention. For instance, under the common understanding that humans and demons have different paths, Xu Xuan and the bellyband had to temporarily part ways with Xiaobai. They set off on their way to Baoqing Lane. The moment the door was pushed open and the mechanical sound of gears meshing and the ever-changing and suspended runes seemed to place one in the "Silent Hill" where Oriental fantasy and cyberpunk blend in a wonderful way. The sweet and beautiful face of the workshop owner, the fox spirit, contrasted sharply with its mature language style. The mechanical fox tail and the bluish-blue electronic artificial eye implanted in the right eye demonstrated a bold fusion of the classical and the mechanical. This combination of traditional aesthetics and modern technology, along with its delicate and unique animation design, has resolved the opposition between science and metaphysics, creating a one-of-a-kind and profound "punk myth". It also proves that "The White Snake: The Origin" actively explores and boldly breaks through the aesthetic interests of the audience by empowering the scenes with technology, perfectly aligning with the acceptance psychology of contemporary cultural audiences. From the perspective of the "evolution theory" of technology, the

development of digital technology has gradually enabled film art to transition from "reproduction" to "recreation", and from "imitation of reality" to "hyper-reality". Among them, the way film image pictures are presented will undergo another revolution. [3] The application of technology has brought new vitality to film animation. For instance, the detailed design of the overall action scenes and the rapid scene transitions in "The Legend of the White Snake" offer the audience immersive scene interactions, such as: The acquaintance and love between Xiaobai and Xu Xuan unfold rapidly in just three high-density plots each lasting about five minutes: a failed assassination attempt and rescue - a boat meeting to express love - a hug in a pagoda to heal wounds. The fast-paced plot development is a precise grasp of the reading habits of modern audiences. In the 15 seconds when Xiaobai recalls his past, flashback memory segments such as "Night Assassination", "Chain Suppression", and "Treasure Counterattack" perfectly adapt to the focus of Generation Z. The high-density information reception field full of sudden attacks attracts the audience's attention and arouses their strong desire to explore, generating immediate emotional stimulation and spiritual impact. From this perspective, "The White Snake: The Origin" uses a cross-media approach to penetrate the survival rules of the new media era: getting infinitely close to the aesthetic and reading needs of the audience, while also vividly reinterpreting the new mythism.

3. The Participatory myth production model from the Perspective of New media

In the course of its development, digital technology has also broken the production mode of traditional myths. The emergence of participatory myths has overturned the narrative authority in traditional myths. The production model of participatory myths is mostly supplemented by secondary creations to complement the narrative and linked to modern technology, thereby mainly enabling the audience to have a more immersive experience. This participatory production model can innovate the original myths from the perspective of new media, thereby reflecting the characteristics of new mythism.

3.1. Fan creations complement the narrative.

After the release of the animated film "White Snake: The Origin", it sparked a craze for secondary creation. "Audiences participated in narrative production through fan creations, mixed video editing, and other means, forming a 'cross-media narrative ecosystem'." [2] This collective wisdom injects fresh vitality into original works. Especially the hand-written animations spontaneously produced by Bilibili users, by filling in the blank Spaces of the official narrative, transform the one-way output process of the medium itself into multi-dimensional cultural reproduction, demonstrating the secondary creation of myths in the audience's active participation during the process of new media dissemination. In the fan music video of "White Snake: Origin", which has received over 500,000 views on Bilibili, there is not only a supplementary narrative to the film animation, but also the author presents the past life stories of Xiaoqing and Xiaobai in the form of a derivative animation, and uses "Encounter with Fireflies" as accompaniment, adapting corresponding film clips according to the lyrics. This also supplements the explicit emotional expression in the official narrative through the combination of animation and music, giving the love story a more reasonable history and ending, which has sparked heated discussions among the audience. In this vigorous wave of secondary creation of original film animations, the audience is not only the recipients but also the creators, who can truly participate in the creative process of film animations. The content expressed in mythological films is not only created by the authorities but also involves the participation of the audience. The authorities do not limit the volume and extent of the adaptation of myths, which also enables the recipients to offer innovative creations from the perspective of new media of myths on the basis of understanding the mythological stories. On the one hand, this is the audience's reconstruction of the film's myth, which can enable the audience to better understand the film animation. On the other hand,

it can also be an innovative expression based on the original text of the film and one of the manifestations of the characteristics of new mythism.

3.2. Immersive mythological experience.

After the successive release of the White Snake series of animated films, West Lake in Hangzhou launched a digital cultural tourism special exhibition mainly featuring real-scene stamp collection and check-in with film themes and AR interaction with the real scenes of West Lake. The mythological romance travels through a thousand years of history and meets tourists at West Lake. Tourists can transform into explorers of the White Snake myth and experience the real scenes depicted in the films up close according to the narrative thread of the animated films. And scan the QR code with your mobile phone to unlock the hidden plots of the White Snake series of movies, triggering a fantastical experience that interweaves reality and fantasy. This kind of online theater rendering, combined with offline real scenes and the integration of mythological stories with modern technology, makes this mythological story spanning a thousand years a tangible physical entity within reach, allowing visitors to experience an immersive narrative experience where the virtual and the real intermingle. Immersion emphasizes the separation from the real environment. That is to say, the audience temporarily forgets the real space they are in and enters a virtual and surreal space to have a personal experience. No matter whether this virtual space is constructed through narrative or media, as long as it can make the audience have a psychological feeling of self-forgetfulness and being on the spot, it is a kind of immersion. [1] Compared with the two-dimensional narrative and interaction of traditional mythological films, such as the flat narrative structure and one-way output to the audience, this model breaks the perceptual barriers between virtual and reality through new media narrative, constructing an immersive mythological experience of two-way communication, which is deeply consistent with the theoretical core of new mythism and reflects the ingenious application of new mythism in film narrative. From the perspective of media ontology, the essence of film art is an incomplete, fictional virtual construction based on reality. The virtual world it constructs can "reverse invade" real life through perceptual immersion - emotional resonance - cognitive reconstruction, thereby completing the secondary production of "hyper-reality". The illusory reality between film and reality enables the audience to obtain an "immersive" experience. Take "The White Snake: The Origin" as an example. Viewers, in the spiritual charm of film art, unconsciously resonate with the protagonist's fate. They are both witnesses to the thousand-year-old myth and participants in driving the plot forward. This kind of flexible and implantable virtual construction blurs the boundary between film and reality, interweaving ancient myths with modern technology, and essentially reflects the application of new mythism in the field of film art.

4. The Media translation of Cultural Symbols from the Perspective of New Media

Cultural symbols refer to the carriers of meaning created by a specific group in the historical process, which carry collective memory and value recognition. They have many forms of presentation, such as language, images, etc. Cultural symbols in films and television are mostly reflected in the film and television representation system of characters and emotions. With the continuous development of digital technology and the emergence of new media, cultural symbols in films and television have also been adjusted and translated to a certain extent according to different media, so as to better meet the modern needs of the audience. In the animated film "White Snake: The Origin", the media translation of cultural symbols is also equally eye-catching. Through translation, the film makes the animated film more in line with the audience's thoughts. This kind of translated symbols is also one of the characteristic manifestations of new mythism.

4.1. The modern reconstruction of film and television images such as demons and immortals.

In the creative process of film animation, the deconstruction and modern reconstruction of traditional mythological images have become important paths for cultural reproduction. The film "White Snake: The Origin" has undergone visual reconstruction in the design of character images. When the "White Snake" series of animated films were building a new story world, they adopted the "expansion" and "replacement" mode to provide new space and offer new narrative possibilities for the development of female characters. [5] Whether it is in the shaping of the overall background of the story world or in the personality traits, body structures and personal experiences of the characters, there are some substitutions. In the scene where Xiaobai reveals the original form of the snake, the scales on the snake's tail have a fine and lustrous texture. The application of particle technology simulates the flowing trajectory of the cyan light spots on the surface of the snake's skin, which not only incorporates the brushwork of the Song Dynasty ink-wash painting but also presents the mechanical aesthetics of the cyber style in the dynamic light and shadow, integrating traditional mythological elements with digital aesthetics and Chinese style design with contemporary aesthetics. Compared with other mythological animated films, "White Snake: The Origin" breaks away from the standardized predicament of simply replicating classic texts by using new media. It conducts a modern reconstruction for Generation Z in a unique and innovative way within the framework of new mythism. In addition to the reshaping of visual images, "The White Snake: The Origin" also makes breakthroughs in the traditional paradigm of gender narrative. This breakthrough is mainly reflected in the dedemonization of female gender temperament and the reconstruction of the subject type. In the civilianized version of the White Snake myth, the White Snake and the green Snake formed a stereotype attached to Xu Xian, and "The White Snake: "Origin" has, however, reshapes the female theme through a brand-new gender narrative approach. For instance, when Xiaobai rescues Xu Xuan in Yongzhou City from the midst of a relentless pursuit, her actions of casting spells and rescuing him break away from the eerie image of the traditional demonic maiden, combining traditional martial arts with dance aesthetics, which is more in line with the body language of modern women. The White Snake and the green snake are no longer the characters and images of a chaste female demon. The film deliberately weakens the narrative chain of "repaying kindness", emphasizing Xiaobai's pursuit and identification with his own identity, and demystifies the "theory of destiny" to emphasize the subjectivity of the individual. In this film, the female characters are more dynamic, with personality traits that are more in line with modern people's aesthetic standards added. At the level of image recognition, the integration of traditional and modern aesthetic experiences has been achieved, making it more acceptable to the public. The story scripts, audio-visual presentations, and even every frame in animated works are all artificially "constructed". The animated text is a kind of "discourse" and also an implicit way of power operation, implicitly carrying hierarchical systems and gender discrimination. By exploring the underlying discourse manipulation mechanism through the main subjects in the animated text, we can theoretically recognize the manipulation of discourse and then read and accept it critically. [4] As the recipients of new media, the audience not only receive image changes that are in line with modern mass consciousness, but also are deeply influenced by the ideas conveyed by the producers behind the pictures, and actively accept and criticize them. The modern reconstruction of character images in "The White Snake: The Origin" brings people a dual shock of vision and thought, providing an enlightening practical model for the new mythological theory.

4.2. Cross-media extended translation of emotional symbols.

In the narrative reconstruction of "The White Snake: The Origin", the cross-media translation of traditional mythological symbols has become a key bridge connecting ancient texts with modern aesthetics. In the traditional folk tales of the White Snake series, hairpins only appear as ordinary ornaments. However, in the animated film "The Legend of the White Snake", the hairpin becomes the core emotional symbol running through the narrative. When Xiaobai, in a state of failed assassination attempt and amnesia due to injury, touched the hairpin, the hairpin instantly transmitted the memory to Xiaobai. This scene proved that the hairpin played the role of a memory carrier. When

the owner of the fox spirit disassembled and repaired the hairpin, the gears exposed inside suggested that the hairpin was actually a high-tech product that stored the memories of living beings. This setting of the film not only enables the traditional mythological narrative to be described in a new way, but also uses the hairpin as an emotional symbol, endowing the object with more meanings and generating variations in the narrative function. It retains the emotional core of the mythological prototype while giving it an expression form that fits the contemporary context. At the same time, it also integrates technological metaphors into it. The presentation of new myths pays attention to the unique transformation of cultural genes. Furthermore, the reconstruction from ethical relations to emotional symbiosis also reflects the cross-media additional translation of emotional symbols. The deconstruction of "human-demon love" in "The White Snake: The Origin" is reflected in the changes in the emotional patterns between Xiaobai and Xu Xuan. The encounter between the two was not due to a simple cause-and-effect relationship of "repaying kindness in the past life in this life", but rather the development of emotions in the process of mutual redemption. In this animated film, Xu Xuan is not the weak man in folk tales who can only wait for the rescue of demons and immortals. When he was escaping from Yongzhou Cheng, he broke through the pursuit of the pursuers by deeply understanding the mechanical skills. When Yu Xiaobai was trapped in the underground cave, the two of them worked together with their demonic power and geographical knowledge respectively and successfully escaped. This narrative strategy of resolving identity barriers through equal dialogue weakens the feudal narrative nature of "human-demon romance", making the emotional relationship between the two more in line with the current model of couples, and pushing their relationship from passive fate to active choice, which is more in line with the aesthetic standards of contemporary audiences. The dynamic translation of traditional symbols is not only the result of certain adjustments made by animated films on the basis of traditional folk tales, but also the vitality of new mythism.

5. Summary

In the continuous development process of new media technologies, it can not only bring new developments to film animation, but also reshape the production logic of traditional myths. The animated film "White Snake: The Origin" uses a pioneering experimental approach to verify that "new mythism" is not merely a simple reproduction, but a paradigm revolution where technology, culture and the audience work together. This article reveals the profound meaning of reconstructing myths from the perspective of new media through three different ways: narrative structure, production mode and cultural symbols. Behind this transformation lies the conflict between digital technology and traditional mythological memory. The continuous development of this digital medium not only provides technical means for the rebirth and reproduction of myths, but also throws traditional culture into a crisis of alienation. Meanwhile, as a means of reflection, new mythism not only demonstrates the adaptive development of traditional myths under new media, but also exposes the risks to the disintegration of traditional myths by new technologies. Therefore, future mythological creation needs to maintain cultural awareness under the empowerment of technology, allowing new media to become a platform for activating traditional myths rather than directly rewriting them. Only in this way can the reconstruction of myths from the perspective of new media truly fulfill the cultural mission of "returning to the roots and opening up the new".

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