

The Lost and Sought Out of the Real World

-- The Postmodernist Aesthetic Representation of the Movie "Rise to Fame"

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Abstract: As a typical postmodernist suspense comedy, "Rise to Fame" presents distinctive postmodernist cultural characteristics with its multiple deconstructions of history and reality without deep flattened image language, and alienated kitsch character group portraits. In terms of image style, the film uses the "parody" of form and the superposition and use of multiple images to build a confusing, absurd and real "social utopia" for us. In terms of narrative technique, the narrative strategy of "de-realization" disturbs and subverts real time, dissolves the serious disguise of the current society, and the director uses the marginalized and confused "Republic of China society" to subvert and challenge the sacredness and solemnity of the real society. In the diverse group portraits, the consistent face-painted characters are replaced by individual carnivals of freedom, thus casting a postmodernist veil on the entire film.

Keywords: Parody Deconstruction "Rise to Fame"; The Postmodernist Aesthetic Representation; Film Analysis.

1. Introduction

At the end of 2021, the film "Rise to Fame" produced by Han Han and directed by Liu Xunzimo was the first film with a box office of more than 100 million that month, becoming a dark horse in the domestic film industry in the second half of the year. The whole film takes the popular "script killing" as the narrative shell, takes the history of the Republic of China as a carrier to satirize reality, and skillfully stitches history and reality perfectly. So that the film is in a comedy atmosphere that seems to be extremely sadistic and absurd, but it is wrapped in a timeless and deep emotional shell, and it is hoped that with a kind of compassion, a kind of laughter and scolding, to analyze the various diseases in addition to the current cultural entertainment. "Fame and Fame" mainly tells the story of a group of frustrated filmmakers who are eager to "make a name for themselves" again by adapting the "Three Old Murders" that caused a sensation in Shanghai, but they don't want to, as the truth is revealed layer by layer, the development of things gradually moves to the edge of uncontrollability. The director uses the distance between video games and reality to establish a kind of "legend" of the little man in a hidden corner, so that the whole film also creates a common game carnival within the image text and the reception of the film audience.

In the threshold space constructed by the filmmaker that deviates from the context of modern society, the subversion of time and order, the separation between the play and the outside of the play are all aimed at challenging the real world and social rules. The form and content of tragicomedy also dissolve the unavailability of the shackles between self and order by small people in reality. The carnival video game and the embedded dramatic structure finally eliminate the audience's complete knowability of the film, and this unknowability, regardless of tragedy or joy, will surely reshape every corner of the meaning of contemporary cinema with the splicing and mixing of postmodern images.

2. Image Language without Depth Flatness

2.1. The Parody of Images

"Reproduction is another feature of postmodern culture. Film itself, as the main medium of postmodern culture, is technically infinitely reproducible. [Chen Xiaoyun. Introduction to Film Studies [M]. Beijing: Beijing United Company Press, 2015 Edition:325] With the development of commodity economy, postmodernism began to emphasize the role of "copying" in order to meet the needs of commodity society. Postmodernism uses mass communication as a medium to dissolve the boundaries between culture, art, and various art categories through a large number of simulations, parodies, analogies and other means. Postmodernist films often use "parody" to deconstruct tradition and classics, achieving comical imitation and morbid humor, so as to eliminate the exploration of depth and meaning in modern literature and art. On the image screen, we can clearly see the presentation of many classic movie bridges such as "The Shining", "The True Color of Heroes" and "Infernal Affairs" in the movie. This kind of anti-subjectivity video parody further wrapped the original sublime concept in secularization. This stacking of fragmented, collaged lens images, meaningless, humorous character dialogue, has become a means for the director to play with the rules and order of reality. Under the perspective of postmodernist culture, the aesthetic expectations of the audience are more valued by the director, and the exploration of the depth of the film and the deep excavation of the moral level are no longer the direction that the creators pay attention to, replaced by the almost paranoid pursuit of power desire, stimulation carnival, and human paradox, and this value concept has also been thoroughly integrated into the postmodernist cultural landscape and become an inseparable part of it, which is also the ideological concept that the director pursues in his creation and is solidified in postmodernism.

2.2. Miscellaneous Forms

"With the rise of postmodernism since the 60s of the 20th centuries, the creation of postmodern films presents a situation of pluralistic and heterogeneous coexistence." Postmodernist films pay more attention to the visual spectacle of image aesthetics, and most films directly choose absurd and bizarre, non-depth plane life fragments as the object of expression, through the blending and mixing of multiple film languages, copying and collage, giving the audience a mental shock to look directly at the social mediocrity and empty world. As a typical postmodernist film, "Rise to Fame" has become a bright color that cannot be ignored in this film through the interweaving and use of multiple ways of diversification, splicing and hybridization in the form of expression. In terms of form, in order to highlight the absurdity of the film itself, the director integrates many contemporary comedy presentation methods, such as: American Hollywood-style humor, Hong Kong week-style film nonsense, Ning Hao's ironic black humor comedy, etc., and even we can see the director's deliberately set up parody and funny frolic clips in the movie. For example, when Qi Leshan began to explain his motives for crime, in order to cover up the truth of the story, he used multiple "grotesque" stories to cover up the tragic facts. When he began to tell everyone, the pain brought by the "original family" and falsely expounded his criminal motives, everyone was immersed in the tragic story he described, but in the end, all the foreshadowing of the early pathos turned into an absurd joke, and he took an absurd theory such as "I call him dad, he beat my horse, is this right" as the main motive for the crime. This kind of concrete display of reality, the deliberate mockery of the ending of the story, has become the director's intentional subversion of the hollowness of real society, opposing the order engraved in the world, rebelling against the rules of the present world, and presenting the meaningless meaning in front of the audience, the meaninglessness of this ending and the irregular expression of ridiculing the order make the audience feel the deconstructed pleasure of authority and the carnival of free image symbol dissolution.

3. The Multiple Deconstruction of History and Reality

3.1. Dismantling of Historical Context

Under the cultural threshold of postmodernism, many postmodernist theorists have more interpretations of the nature of history. History in postmodernist films mostly has an absurd assumption, which is no longer a carrier to narrate the past, but as a "container" for transmitting modern cultural ideas and concepts, with the help of the sacred solemnity of history, dissolving and satirizing the current social reality. Jameson once pointed out in his book that "they are not historical films, they are a bit like fashionable dramas." It is characterized by their choice of appreciative taste for the past, which is ahistorical, and that the film needs to consume images of a certain period in the past, rather than telling us how history has developed. "History no longer has the sublime sense of the past in postmodernist films, and even "playing history" has become a normal expression in postmodernist films, postmodernist film artists, often the grand and heavy historical background with the entertainment and consumerization of modern social context, so as to build a "new society" with both historical and realistic

characteristics, with the help of history to convey the director's accusations and reflections on current social phenomena. In "Rise to Fame", the director does not stick to the objective restoration of history, but regards history as a reproduction of reality, daily life as a false performance, interests as an important bond between people, and even compares the entire film to a false game. Under the camera in the play, they are not only participants in the film, but also performers in reality. Under the cold lens, they put the mask of hypocrisy on their faces, pretending to cater to each other, and flattering each other, which is the true portrayal of the rebellion against ideal reality, abandoning the individual's bravado and self-consciousness expression in traditional films, no longer writing the slightest trace of the solemn and sacred historical process, but through blasphemous and dissolving discourse posture to carry out a strong inquiry and reflection on social reality.

3.2. Coupling of the Real Environment

With the rise of postmodernism, the boundary between history and reality is gradually blurred, and under the intricate interweaving of history and reality, the sense of history gradually disappears, replaced by a mirror presentation of social reality. In the threshold space of playful social reality, history and reality are no longer binary opposites, reality has been used as the "secondary writing" of history, infiltrating into the grand history, and the leveled ideology without depth has become one of the aesthetic characteristics of postmodernist films, and it has begun to re-reflect on reality and history with a "slashing of the depth mode". In this process, the "history" is gradually compressed and integrated into the current "reality", and the elimination and integration of the two presents an alternative posture against rational culture, and this expression method with uncertainty and chance has also become an important performance feature of contemporary aesthetic entertainment and popularization. As a work that reflects reality, the historical background of the Republic of China society is only used as a carrier to tell the story, and reality is the real foothold of the director. In the film, but not out of touch with the current social environment, the director always tells this story with the story returning to the present and paying attention to the spirit of the individual, and the characters in the play are real feedback that reflects a certain group of portraits in modern society. There are governments with collusion between officials and businessmen, markets controlled by capitalists, rotten and dirty entertainment circles, and small people silently carried, these are only a corner of society, but behind them are the true reflection of contemporary society. However, although the society is so unbearable and human nature is so ugly, the director has never destroyed the goodness and beauty in human nature, and does not lose that touch of warmth in telling the broken and cold story, there is no absolute good and evil, good and bad, there is no absolute face-painted character image in the movie, everyone is growing in this process, they are breaking the shackles of reality in doubt and denial, and realizing individual self-liberation.

4. Group Portraits of Alienated Kitsch Characters

4.1. The Marginalization of Group Portraits

In the current cultural context, postmodernism constantly challenges the cultural laws of modernism that pretends to be

orthodox. In terms of concept, more attention is paid to the dissolution of depth and the fragmentation of traditional rules, and more attention is paid to the depthless and marginalized character image in character shaping. Under the director's lens, the film no longer presents the honest and rigid intellectuals of the past, nor the politicians who worry about the country and the people, nor patriotic young people full of blood, but instead a group of "dramas" with obvious entertainment and civilian tendencies. They are like outcasts of the times, and their lives are intertwined by fate. Their gathering is not to expose all kinds of false illusions of social existence and realize their lofty personal ideals, but to seek fame and profit, and interests are their starting point from beginning to end, they from the beginning of the infinite scenery, spirit, to tear the scars revealed by the mask of reality, everyone is burdened with unspeakable sadness and suffering, they are like real clowns in a closed environment wanton jumping, indulge in pleasure. Hassan once said: "In the confusion of complete liberation, in the 'rebellion' against everyday reason, in many comical imitations of poetic harmony, in countless times of humiliation, profanity, dramatic coronation and deposition, human beings have found their special logic - the second life". In this closed environment, they achieve their own "second liberation", just like in the movie, before the belief and ideal disappear, under the spotlight, accompanied by the sound of jazz models, they began to indulge in dance, in this non-ideal closed environment, accompanied by music and dance, with the help of the swaying of the limbs, the expression of desire, so as to forget the differentiation between the ideal world and the real society, in this absurd, false, unreal style atmosphere, to achieve the final carnival.

4.2. Decentralization of Individual Images

Decentralization is a hallmark of postmodernism. The pan-elitist group portrait of characters has gradually retreated from the center of the historical stage, and the deviation and absurdity of individual images have gradually dissolved the authority of the central discourse. As the subject of consciousness, the individual image often narrates the materialized world from an objective and calm perspective, and perceives the pathology and hypocrisy of the real world through a deconstructive perspective on the external world. In the movie "Rise to Fame", the director subverts and completely rebels against the traditional solidified character image through the awakening of the individual. Lee Ka-fai, as the most anti-centralized character in this film, has been out of place in the entire society since his appearance in the film. As a journalist during the Republican period, his dress was very different from the society of the time. We can clearly see in the play that all the reporters who appear in the film (except Li Jiahui) are all suits and shoes, wearing robes and hats. On the other hand, our screenwriter Li, a scruffy and greasy middle-aged frustrated man, with a completely untaken medium-long hair, let it be scattered, his face is withered, and his shoulders are hunched, which is extremely contrary to the overall social environment. The director did

not mold him as a son of a culture detached from the real world, but crumpled all the metaphysical character halos, extracted the character image inherent in the audience's consciousness, and presented the most primitive and authentic character survival state. Through the de-encharmed character shaping, the director puts Li Jiahui, a marginalized individual, in the film text, and this "masochistic" image alienation of the individual makes the original sublime character image constantly deconstructed, and the individual characteristics continue to be highlighted with the center shift. Through the disenchantment of the "pan-elitist" character image, in the deconstruction layer after layer, the elite character image created in modernist films is pulled down from the altar, from "complex" to "simple", which fits the essence of postmodernist culture and realizes the ultimate liberation of individual image.

5. Conclusion

Through the hypothetical deliberate imitation of traditional drama, the deconstructed historical culture, and the aesthetic tendency of entertainment routine, "Rise to Fame" subversively deconstructs the sacred and solemn history, making the entire film full of doubts: the fiction of the characters, the imagination of the story, and the difficulty of guessing the ending. The director compares the whole story to a game of satirical reality, condensing the shell of truth and goodness, and cannot hide the core of entertainment. The director borrows the pure entertainment of the "film stage" and uses the history of "simulation" as the background, and uses the carnival of reality to dissolve the darkness of politics and the inequality of power. Just as Lee Ka-fai said, "power is temporary, laughter is eternal", use the pleasure of reality to fight the crisis of alienation in society, and use the pleasure of entertainment to dissolve the deep meaning of things. As a small-cost suspense comedy with satirical charm, although there are flaws, the flaws are not hidden. At the end of the film, when Li Jiahui withdrew the palm that was about to touch the truth, we saw his insistence on truth and justice, and also saw his restraint and convergence of self-desire, rational determination and emotional rebellion completely broke out at the last moment, but left the audience with endless fantasies at the last moment, allowing the audience to feel the director's pleasure of free pursuit and the carnival of detachment from reality.

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