

A Study of Narratology under the Consciousness of Ethnic Groups——From the Yunnan Minority Film “Stone City on the Clouds”

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Abstract: The film "Stone City on the Cloud" focuses on a stone city of the Naxi people in Yunnan, telling the twisted and touching story of the Musilong family. The film differs from other minority films of the period in that the director tries to break through the traditional patterns of these subjects and find a new path for the merging and compatibility of modern culture and traditional minority culture. This paper explores the film through the integration of the subjectivity of the "other", the transformation of "community consciousness" and "spectralization", using Grimes' "meta-model of action" theory.

Keywords: Ethnic minorities; otherness; ethnic consciousness; spectralization

1. Introduction

Since the founding of New China, minority films have passed through the "Seventeen Years", the "New Period" and the late 20th century and entered the new millennium of the 21st century. The "Stone City on the Clouds" is a film by eight ethnic minorities. "Stone City on the Clouds", directed by Zhang Chun, an artist from Bayi Film Studio, and Zhang Lei, a new generation director, won the "Outstanding New Film Award of the Minority Film Festival" at the 26th China Golden Rooster and Hundred Flowers Film Festival. The film takes place in a mysterious and beautiful stone city in Lijiang, Yunnan Province, and tells the story of the reunion of the Naxi Mushi Long family at the "Sanduo Festival", which is a touching and ethnic story.

Chinese minority films have gone through several periods, including the "Seventeen Years", the New Period, and the turn of the century at the end of the 20th century and the 1990s. Due to the influence of the film production system and the political situation, Yunnan minority films of this period, such as "Five Golden Flowers" and "Moya Dai", showed the phenomenon of responding to the ideological call of the time. Although the characters and actors are full of minority flavor, the films are ultimately constructed as modernized people under the packaging of ethnic elements, and the creation and construction of minority films in this period are based on the complex and changing political environment and film system. New Period: With the end of the Cultural Revolution, the production system of Chinese films changed, and the Chinese film industry in the new period moved from the planned economy to the market economy and began to enter a transition. "Some of them continued the creative line of revolutionary realism, some reflected on the Cultural Revolution and traditional culture, and some were influenced by the trend of emancipation, innovation and reform. In the film "Youth Sacrifice", the image of ethnic minorities is primitive and simple, and the conflict and contradiction between them and Chinese culture begins to arise, and the image of ethnic minorities is used as a reference to realize the creator's reflection on the "Cultural Revolution". From 1993 to 1996, China's film system was transformed again, with film companies changing from "ownership" to "shareholding" and from "career-oriented" to "industry-oriented". The film companies changed from "business-oriented" to "industry-oriented" and "management-oriented", and various regions began to set up film companies with limited liability, and the old "film factories" began to exist in name only. With the change of the system, the focus of film creation began to be tilted toward the market, the audience and the box office, and the operation modes of "New Year's Eve" and "Golden Stall" emerged, and films entered a diversified development mode with market economy as the main focus. During this period, Yunnan minority films were mainly propaganda of ethnic culture and customs, serving as selling points and attractions for tourism consumption, showing ethnic costumes and the unique natural and humanistic landscape of Yunnan.

Between the 1970s and the 1990s, Yunnan minority films went through a transition from a planned

economy to a market economy, from political intentions to cultural introspection (traditional minority culture colliding with Chinese culture) and commercial spectacle presentation. After the new millennium, the collision, contradiction and conflict between Yunnan's own cultural traditions and modern culture has become a narrative theme since the new millennium, presenting the anxiety and reflection of minority cultures in the face of foreign modern culture, which is one of the distinctive features of the new century. *Stone City on the Clouds* takes the Naxi minority in Yunnan as the background to show the exchange and collision between traditional ethnic culture and foreign modern culture, and the ethnic spectacle, while trying to break away from the dichotomous contradiction and collision between ethnicity and modernity in the previous Yunnan minority films, and convert this contradiction into integration and acceptance. The story takes place in a stone city in Lijiang, Yunnan Province. As the traditional Naxi festival "Sanduo Festival" is approaching, the children of the Mucshilong family, who are working abroad, are about to return home to participate in the annual ethnic festival. The youngest son, Mushu, is carrying a marriage contract with the village head's daughter and Chunyan, but he brings his girlfriend, Loli, from Lijiang; the youngest daughter, Muyu, is pregnant and her foreigner boyfriend, Xi Luo, also returns to Stone Town, and the return of the two brings a lot of turmoil to the family and the village. *Stone City on the Cloud* not only shows the unique Naxi minority culture but also the conflict and contradiction between modern foreign culture and minority culture, and the director tries to blend the cultural conflicts and contradictions in minority films, finding a way to merge the two different paths of culture, through the "other" "Through the integration of the identities of Loli and Xiluo and the change of consciousness of the Naxi people in *Stone City on the Clouds* in accepting the withdrawal of marriage and unmarried pregnancy, as well as the transformation of the ethnic spectacle into universal values, the director has built us the evolution and progress of the minority theme films in the new millennium to the present.

2. The subjectivity of the "other" is integrated

The "other" is a reference object that is both different from and connected to the subject, and the appearance of the other is essential to the "self-awareness" that constitutes the "self". In other explained in the development of Yunnan minority films. During the 17-year period, the "self" and the "other" were the various classes under the leadership of the Communist Party, the minority brothers, and the class enemies such as the Nationalist Party reactionaries and imperialists, and the two were "dichotomous". At that time, the two were "dichotomous". Later, with economic development, China began to enter a period of transition from a planned economy to a market economy, and advanced modern culture and ideology began to enter the minority regions. The "other" and "self" in Yunnan minority films during this period were foreign culture and traditional ethnic culture respectively, and this "dichotomy" changed from class to group consciousness and cultural differences. In the new millennium, the dichotomy between the "other" and the "self" is slowly fading away, from class, cultural differences and group consciousness to unity and integration, as represented by *Stone City on the Cloud*. The film is a reflection of the dichotomy between "other" and "self" in terms of class, cultural differences and group consciousness.

The film begins with Luo Li as the storyteller, and Mushu takes her to his hometown of Stone City of the Naxi tribe, where her marriage with Mushu is treated with indifference by the people of the village because of his previous marriage contract. Even the children in the village would say something like "the chicken in the flowery mountains has a broken foot", which shows that Luo Li, who enters the minority culture as the "other", is not in the same position. When Xiluo and Muyu's group met Mishiro and introduced their identities, Mishiro was resistant to and rejected the foreign boy. When Xiluo and Muyu's group met Moshiro and introduced themselves, Moshiro was resistant and repulsed by the foreign boy, and even fell to the ground for refusing to shake hands. But as the story progresses, Luo Li finally gets together with Mushu, and when Xiluo and Muyu are facing expulsion from the village, they are moved by the efforts of the people to stay with Dadongba and hold a traditional Naxi wedding. The "Others" begin to integrate and gradually change their identities, from being alien to learning and experiencing to intermingling with the traditional culture of the ethnic group, and in the end, the minority culture is not replaced by the foreign culture or the impact causes pain, but begins to merge and integrate towards the reconciliation of duality. As the "other" of foreign culture, namely Loli and Xiluo, they have completed the transformation of their own identity in the stone city on the clouds, and the conflict between modern culture and traditional minority culture has been solved. "They find a path of cultural integration."

3. The change of "community consciousness"

The "group identity" in ethnic minority films is a label that distinguishes them from Han culture and

Han Chinese. During the "Seventeen Years" period, their identities were "viewed" and "spoken" in the form of cultural clashes, which created a separation, thus highlighting the cultural disparity and emphasizing the existence of minority groups as "ethnic groups". After the new era, Yunnan minority films became more aware of their ethnicity and began to focus on specific ethnic cultures and customs, not only showing ethnic songs and dances, costumes and the external forms of ethnic spectacles, but also constructing the image of minority groups through image and character building, and constructing their own. The film is not only about the songs, dances, costumes, and the external forms of ethnic spectacles, but also about the construction of the image of ethnic minorities through the portrayal of images and characters, and the construction of the image of ethnic minorities to express their own characteristics[1]. Both the "Seventeen Years" and "New Age" Yunnan minority films emphasize the "ethnicity" of the minority through different expressions, including The "Han" (Han culture, modern foreign culture) and the "minority" (minority culture, cultural traditions) are in a confrontational and dichotomous position. As a film about Yunnan's ethnic minorities in the new millennium, "Stone City on the Cloud" also contains cultural contradictions and dichotomous confrontations, but as the story progresses, the director skillfully manages the gulf between foreign culture and traditional minority culture. [2]

In Structural Semantics, Grimes proposed the "action meta-model" theory, which suggests that characters and their variants in any narrative text can be categorized into six roles, namely subject/object, sender/receiver, and assistant/adversary. The "action meta-model" has since been widely used in film studies, which can effectively analyze and draw conclusions from the actions and movements of the characters in a film. In "Stone Town on the Cloud", Loli, Silo, and the Mukishiro family form a network of relationships with the people of Stone Town, thus demonstrating a shift in the concept of "community consciousness" in the film.

The beginning and the end of the film are composed of Luo Li's autobiography, which shows that Stone City on Clouds tells the story of how outsiders integrate and understand the stone city of the Naxi people. On the other hand, the traditional minority culture is represented by Mu Shilong, who is the opponent of Luo Li and another object, and above him there is also the highest generation of the Naxi tradition. On the other hand, the traditional minority culture is represented by Mukshilong as the opponent of Loli, i.e., the adversary is also another object, and above him there is also the highest generation of the Naxi tradition, i.e., the Great Dongba as the sender (another subject), and the village chief and other people as assistants. (As shown in Figure 1)

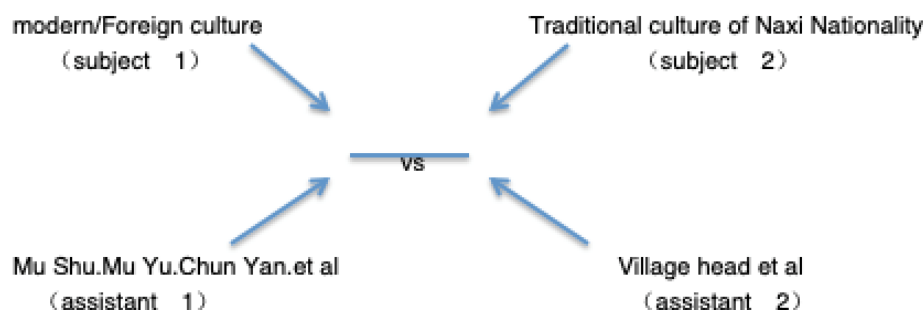


Figure 1: Character Relationships

As we can see, Luo Li and Mu Shilong represent different objects and different camps, and there is a confrontational situation between the two sides. As the film develops, Mu Shu successfully withdraws from the marriage with the help of Chun Yan, and then Mu Yu and Xi Luo's departure from the village is also helped by Da Dong Ba, while the relationship between Xi Luo and Mu Shilong and Mu Shu and Mu Shilong is also repaired, and finally Mu Yu and Xi Luo complete their marriage in Stone City with a traditional Naxi wedding. (As shown in Figure 2)

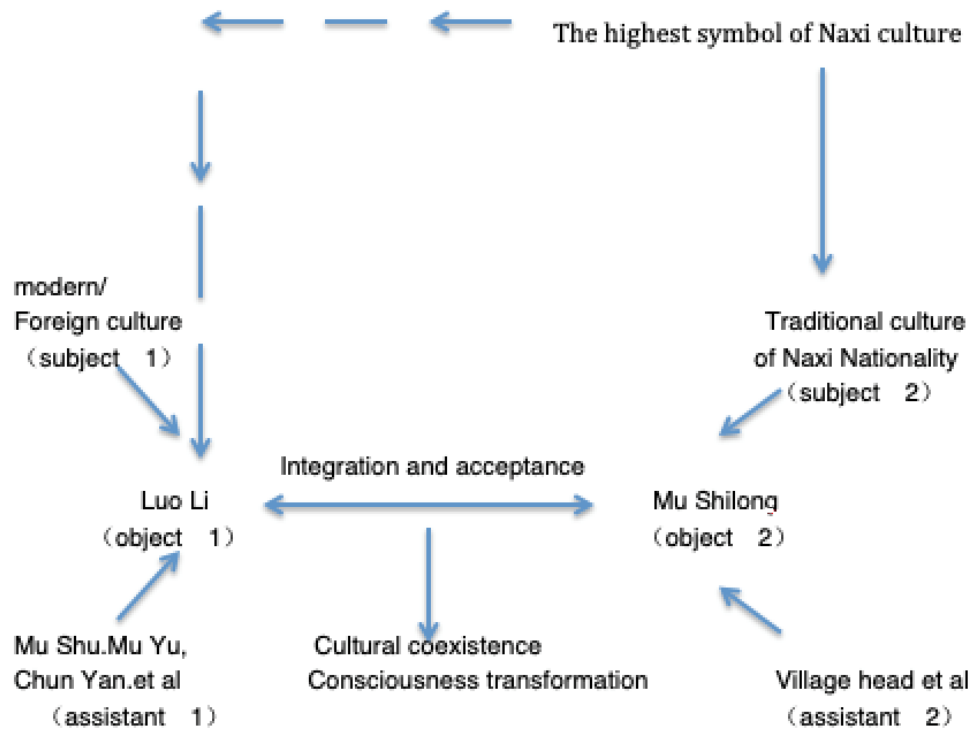


Figure 2: Changes in ethnic conflict

The film breaks the relationship between "community consciousness" and foreign culture in the past minority films, and through the integration of foreign culture and the acceptance of minority culture, it creates a relationship of symbiosis and coexistence of multiple cultures, completing the transformation and sublimation of the traditional thinking of "community consciousness".

4. "Spectacle" of value transfer

Historically, ethnic minority films are inseparable from nationalized elements, including local customs, folklore, costumes, architecture and other "spectacles". From the early days of cinema, "spectacle" has been a purpose of cinema itself, from Georges Méliès to American science fiction films, all of which are concrete presentations of spectacle. "What is revealed is an essential attribute that lurks behind the quiet evolution of film history and the fleshing out of film concepts and ideas - the nature of cinema's spectacle.[3] "Whether it is an art film or a commercial film, an artistic act or a commercial act 'to look good' is a simple and pertinent criterion. To 'look good' the presentation of spectacle is undoubtedly a very important factor." It can be seen that "spectacle" has been rooted in the genes of cinema. The strategy of "spectacle" is equally important in minority films, and this way of expression is also evidenced by a large number of films of this genre, whether it is Five Golden Flowers or The Bride with the Flower Waist or Red River, all of which portray exquisite costume jewelry and the strange natural and humanistic landscape of Yunnan. With the development of cinema and the progress of the times, the demand for "spectacle" in Yunnan minority films has also changed, with some using strange landscapes and ethnic customs as selling points and attractions to promote tourism; some creating spectacle images to construct the image of minority groups; and some using spectacle as a narrative strategy to express the creator's Some use the spectacle as a narrative strategy to express the artistic emotions of the creator [4]. In "Stone City on the Clouds", there are also abundant images of spectacle, which can convey the value of "value" while conveying the exotic landscape and humanistic style.

There are many traditional Naxi culture and elements in the film, such as the "Sanduo Festival" ritual scene, Naxi ritual dance, Naxi writing, Dongba painter's paintings and Naxi wood carvings. In the film, Mushu and Chunyan are in a classroom, and the camera places the Naxi script on the blackboard and modern Chinese between them in a panoramic way [5]. This is a reflection of the value of ethnic culture education; when Mushu and Luo Li meet, they are filmed communicating about Naxi artworks, discussing Naxi carvings and Dongba paintings together. As a representative of the Naxi culture, Mushu passes on to Luo Li, a representative of modern culture. [6] It is interesting to note that Mushu and Luo Li have opened an art gallery in Lijiang with their carvings, which is a proof of the value of the

"spectacle" becoming reality. This way of expression undoubtedly presents the "spectacle" image, and at the same time, it is a pleasure to listen to it, and also transforms the eye-catching elements of ethnic minorities into real values for transmission. [7]

As a Yunnan minority film created in the new millennium, it breaks through the cultural dichotomy of Yunnan minority films in the past, takes the "other" as the narrative subject and integrates the Naxi minority, while completing the transformation of traditional "ethnic consciousness", forming a new pattern of mutual integration and acceptance of minority culture and modern culture, and conveys a rich and colorful Naxi culture with realistic value on the basis of "spectacle" video presentation.

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