

Imagination Symbolization and Reality: The Interpretations of Pema Tsenden on the “Three Theories” of Balloon

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Abstract: With the depiction of ethnic customs and the further cultivation of ethnic culture, the films of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang have formed a unique cultural system and cultural influence. The film *Balloon*, directed by Pema Tsenden, has made multidimensional presentations and interpretations to the three orders theory of Lacan, that is the “the real order” from the original id, “the imaginary order” from the self-mirror and the “symbolic order” from the socio-linguistic and cultural system. It can be said that the Three Orders Theory enables the film *Balloon* directed by Pema Tsenden to show the local culture of Xinjiang to the audience from an internal perspective of subjectivity and self-expression.

Keywords: Pema Tsenden, *Balloon*, Lacan, The three orders theory.

1. Introduction

With the depiction of ethnic customs and the further cultivation of ethnic culture, the films of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang have formed a unique cultural system and cultural influence. From perspective of rigid impression, the films of ethnic minorities usually represent a significant theme, with many “inflexible” ways to the representation of ideology. However, in recent years, the films of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang spread the Xinjiang culture all around with the development of audio-visual technology and is no longer occupied by the expressing the ideology, thus fully highlighting the national characteristics of culture of films. It can be said that the films of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang that carrying culture have also become an important driving force for building the sense of community of the Chinese nation. What is worth praising is that a series of films directed by Pema Tsenden, instead of viewing Xinjiang’s scenery as a heterogeneous field of curiosity and wonder, but to meet the aesthetic need of audience for the objective appearance of Xinjiang, that is presenting the culture of Xinjiang in a subjective way. The film, *Balloon*, directed by Pema Tsenden, shows the local culture of Xinjiang to the audience in an internal perspective of subjectivity and self-voice. There is no doubt that we can analyze the cultural connotations hidden behind the film of *Balloon* from the perspective of the three orders theory to analyze it.

2. The “Three Orders Theory” of Lacan and The Creation of Films

Lacan of France and Freud of Austria are both great thinkers in the history of the world. Although both of them did not have many connections in the practical aspects, the theory of Lacan drew a lot of inspirations from Freud's theory. Drawing inspiration from Freud's theory, Lacan creatively put forward the three orders theory, that is the “symbolic order, real order and imaginative order”, which are the “real order” from the original ID, the “imaginary order” from the self-mirror, and the “symbolic order” from the socio-linguistic and cultural system respectively. Based on the Freud's theory of

the three orders theory of ID, ego and superego, the creators of film art produce many images, because the three orders theory, to some extent, deeply reveal the operating mechanism of the audience going to the cinema.

Famous cinematographer Metz believes that: “the qualities of the film, is not that it may reproduce the imaginative world, but that it is the imaginative world from the beginning, it is a signifier to constitute the imaginative world.” [1] From this point of view, the creation of film itself is a field of imaging, because as a dream-making art, the most important and fundamental of it is to meet the aesthetic need of mass for imagination. If the creation of the film is presented and showed only around the “imaginative order”, then the philosophy and artistry of the film will be ignored and forgotten.

In fact, the philosophical meaning of the film derives from the portray of the “symbolic order” and the “real order”. If the imaginative order is reflected as a complete self-image of the “people” as the subject, as a mirror image presentation of self-awareness, then, essentially, the “symbolic order” is a kind of “semiotics castration” that repress “self”, is actually a shackle on the role of “me” endowed by society. As a subject, “I” is restricted by the context of social laws. It can be said that the symbolic order is a complex operating machine, which involves in many subjects and dominates the consciousness of the public in a rationalized, pre-conscious and latent way. For the Real order, he is not as objective and real as the literal meaning. On the contrary, Lacan believes that the “real world” is a great paradox, the mass cannot find it in real life, but it is also an objective, perpetually present but insubstantial being. But as the subject, “I” am eager for knowing the contents in the real world. For example, for the showing of “love”, love, as a practical emotional embodiment, indeed, is impossible for the public to have in the objective and real society. However, with the support of the imaginative order and the symbolic order, the public has a jolly desire for love.

If it is the presentation of the “imaginative world” in the film that satisfies the aesthetic interest of public to the imaginative space, then the presentation of the “symbolic world” and the “real world” in the film makes the public complete the exploration of self, id and superego in the

process of watching the film. In essence, Lacan's the Three orders theory reveals the deep-rooted causes of film creation, and films can ascend to the ranks of art because of the presentation and performance of the three orders. As a unique artistic product, film art reproduced the three orders of "symbolic", "real" and "imaginative" perfectly, and presented the three orders on the screen.

3. The Presentation of “The Three Orders” in The Film Balloon

The three orders theory of Lacan was formed with the formation of the original self, the infants transit from the original mixture to the duality-world belonging to mother and child, then the father intervenes in the relationship between mother and child as a competitor, breaks the imagined duality-world between mother and child. For the film Balloon, the fundamental requirement with philosophical meaning is to reproduce, represent and present the semantic imaginative, symbolic and real world of Lacan. As a film reflecting the Tibetan culture, the film Balloon directed by Pema Tsenden depicts the life of the Tibetan people in the 1990s. Pema Tsenden, as the leader of the "Tibetan New Wave", the uniqueness of the Tibetan elements also reflects the marginalization style of the film, which is also becoming more intense because of the presentation of the “three orders field” of Lacan.

3.1. The presentation of imaginative world of narcissism and open

In the imaginative world, the subject pursues to satisfy his own desires and strives to release his own energy without the control of moral or legal factors. Clement, a French critic said: "The term of imaginative world is directly related to fantasy and moving images in history, but in the expression of Lacan, it refers to the logic and fantasy. If the symbolic world is a sequence, then the imaginative world refers to the changes that is possible to have within that sequence: it is a very special kind of change, which has various personalities, and which forms the basis of the individual and its unrepeatability characters." [2] Our relationships with ourselves and others is one that presenting the imagination

The movie Balloon portrays the direct relationship between people as an "imagination". In fact, Darger has been pursuing the expression of mirrored self while growing up, so the feature of "narcissism" is filled in the visualized actions of Darger. In the relationship between Darger and Dolger, Darger is like a rutting ram, only to satisfy his own inner and physical release, while ignoring the inner emotions of Dolger. When Dolger proposes to abort the child, Darger assault on Dolger without control. From the perspective of mirror image, Darger reveals narcissism and self-identification with his fantasies and imaginations. Focusing on the relationship between Dolger and Droma, Dolger, as the older sister, established a mirror image of herself in the case of the death of her parents, and volunteered to sever the relationship between Droma and the young teacher Debenga according to her own cognition. Dolger hopes that her sister can end her relationship with him completely, so she took the initiative to throw books into the stove and burned and face deBenjada alone in order to prevent the entanglement of him on Droma. In the expression form of mirrored self, the subject follows his own thoughts and will, and the behavioral expression of the subject is filled with the exclusive cognition of the outside

world and the world. In addition, according to the linguistic model of Lacan, "the second stage of the imaginative world is that, when children see the image of their mother holding them in the mirror, they have the illusion of identity, imagining that they are part of their mother in the mirror." [3]

From the creation characteristics of Balloon, Pema Tsenden left an open ending, that is, did Dolger have an artificial abortion? This makes the film have a more open and semantically rich space to interpret it. Tibetan and Han people have different opinions on whether Dolger should give birth to the child from the perspective of their own culture. Pema Tsenden satisfies the imaginations of audience in an open way to end the film.

3.2. The presentations of symbolic world rooted in the national cultural system

In the symbolic world, language is the basis of the social contract, and the subject constructs and forms its own unique essence according to the existed concepts and orders of language, culture, habit, thought and so on. Freud once said: How do you find happiness in the pain of losing mother? The secret is to regard parting as a prelude to make happy return. In fact, the symbolic world refers to the level of moral norms and behavioral rules of people who play a decisive role in forming the real subject. It is emphasized that symbolization is not a perceptual image, but plays a restrictive role in the imaginative world of the subject, thus forming its moral principles and behavior criterions." [4] Because of the language system, laws are created, and the symbolic world also has such laws. The symbolic world constitutes the perception of subjects to reality.

In the film, the concepts of reincarnation, life and death that is mentioned many times, construct a unique narrative expression form that is exclusive to Tibetan. The grandfather led the children to light butter lamps for their dead grandmother and prayed for blessings. The narration of the concept of reincarnation from the innocent children shows the values of the children and the elderly, that is death is not a terrible and frightening thing, and the children are proud of being reincarnating. When the old man died, the family did not show griefed, but show calm and composure. Different from the traditional custom of being sorrow after death, the unexpected calm reflects the deep-rooted cultural tradition of the Tibetan people. It shows the unique perspective of the Tibetan people on ecology and life and death. From this perspective, the film embodies the deep-rooted Tibetan culture. In the film Balloon, funeral is not only a farewell to the departed soul, but also a lesson to maintain the social order and standardize ethics. To some extent, life and death represent the deepest cultural concept of a country and a nation. The discussion of the concept of life and death in the film Balloon enables the audience to know more about the cultural tradition of the Tibetan people.

The formation of regional culture is a process of long-term development. Pema Tsenden conveys the complex of homeland in the form of films and spreads the traditional Tibetan culture through different forms. The development of modern science, such as condoms and test-tube baby, is different from the traditional knowledge that is obtained from the Confucian classics by the Tibetan people. In a certain sense, science and tradition have a certain shock. And the interpretations of animism, that is, all things have spirits, is reflected in the animal of sheep in the film. Dolger is contrasted with the sheep showing that everything is alive.

Symbolic order is impossible to realize the domestication of human beings, as for the reproduction and breed of human beings, I feel the dilemma of Dolger, just as the Doctor Zhou Cuo said to Dolger: "women came to this world is not to have children." From the animal's point of view, the infertile ewes are useless and can only be sold, which cannot escape the fate from being slaughtered. For animals without a language system, ecological concepts of animistic notions are conflicted with it, which forces the public to consider the disadvantages that the traditional concepts exist and reflect it in the process of socialization and modernization.

3.3. The representation of the real world mediated by dream

"Lacan believed that in addition to the imaginative world and symbolic world, there is also a real world. The real world does not refer to the real society where we live, but to the field that has been removed by filters such as language and impressions. People usually cannot reach the real world; the real world will appear in illusion and art." [5] In the real world, the subject afflicts with each other between being and non-being. Constructing reality out of nothing. God worship is the induction history of human soul, which has its obscure and unsolved aspect. The underlying structure of ritual or worship activities "is to integrate the different and divergent phenomena into a integral universe, so that the original vitality of all things in the world and the original connection between all things in the world can be renewed".

For the ethnic minorities in Tibet, the perception of deification is imprinted on everyone's memory. In the form of Tibetan films, Pema Tsenden, from the perspective of people's daily life, portrays the real image of the Tibetan people, and constructs an expressive space based on reality and plain style. Darger believes in Tibetan religion strictly. The inference made by the Guru is highly recognized and unquestionable: that the pregnancy of Dolger is the reincarnation of her dead father. The mysterious image of the guru in the film also highlights the authority and secrecy of religion in the geo-culture of Tibetan. Darger is determined to ask Dolger to give birth to the child, but Dolger, considering the economic burden of the family and the mental and physical pain of childbirth, wants to abort the child. Here, the baby in the belly is "none". From the timeline, the death of the old man has not been "passed seven weeks", and the pregnancy may be more coincident. The real world is the social objects and social innovation. The director does not focus the narrative emphasis on the final result of the child, but inspires the collision between belief and science through the child in the belly. The film contains many dreamlike lens of "none", the

mole on the back of Jiangyang is regarded as the reincarnation of his dead grandma, his two younger brothers removed the mole symbolizing the reincarnation of birthmark from his elder brother and running naked in the desert and playing. The reflection of reincarnation forecast that the family will struggle repeatedly in the idea of rebirth. Dolger's face is reflected in the shaking water, and the ripple makes his face blurred in the lens, which shows the inner tangle and confusion of Dolger about whether to abort her child.

4. Conclusion

The three orders theory of Lacan is actually an interpretation of Freud's theory of Id, ego and superego. Films, as a kind of cultural and artistic products, its cultural connotation hidden in it is worth the concerning and attention of all the public, the film "balloon", directed by Pema Tsenden, creatively presents the imaginative world, real world and symbolic world, making a more intense philosophical meaning, and the audience can have a deep thinking while watching the film. At the end of the film, the director give the right of thinking to the audience to think about how to balance the development of religious culture and social science, and how to make the Tibetan people integrate into a diverse community of shared future more naturally and harmoniously. The film "Balloon" captures the plain and natural characteristics of Tibetan culture, and integrates the development characteristics of the new era into the original ecological society. The presentation of the three orders field makes the film have more philosophical meanings, and also makes the creative style of Pema Tsenden present a philosophical meaning.

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