

# *The Cultural Characteristics of Film and Television Drama Adapted by Chinese Internet Literature*

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**Abstract:** This matter was found the cultural characteristics of Chinese Internet Literature adapting film and television in the 21st century, the object of this research. The Internet Literature was selected because with the popularization of Internet technology in China, Chinese literary enthusiasts have created a new literary genre that relies on network writing and reading. The new genre has profoundly transformed Chinese culture and society. Of that, one of the most notable things is a large number of films and television dramas adapted from Internet literature have appeared. In the research, the author come to the conclusion that the adaptation of literary works into films or television dramas is a proces closely related to social culture. The specific social culture influences the directors and writers, as well as the aesthetic acceptance of audiences. The article concludes that the cultural characteristics of the adapted films and television dramas mainly embodied in three aspects: de-centralism under the influence of post-modernism, construction of desire culture and the profound impact of commercialization.

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, Internet Literature in China has become a popular literary genre. Michel Hockx is the first Western scholar to survey the concept comprehensively in English. He describes in detail the types of Chinese literature currently on the Internet and the aesthetic, political, and ideological challenges of its novels. He denotesthat since the 1990s, Chinese literature enthusiasts have explored new literature genre, which was booming in China and its practices, sites, and terminologies rapidly became part of serious literary discourse. [1] At the same time, the Internet Literature also promotes the combination of Internet literature and film, and a large number of films and television dramas adapted from Internet literature have appeared.

Literature and film, as two very important media, have different cultural attributes. In the eyes of some cultural scholars, literature is the elite culture, while films and television dramas are the popular culture. However, in recent years, the Internet Literature is also considered as a popular cultural product, and many Chinese directors seek to adapt those popular online literary works into

films or television dramas. The adaptation process is based on the same cultural foundation, that is, the manifestation of popular culture.

The concept of popular culture is broad and profound. Both Birmingham School and Frankfurt School have studied the concept. The Birmingham School regards popular culture as a popular culture loved, owned and enjoyed by ordinary people, which is the daily life of the people. [2] Frankfurt School regards popular culture as a standard, vulgar and lack of depth commodity produced by the cultural industry to meet consumer demand. It serves as a tool for deceiving the public by combining political and economic forces. In essence, it is a commercial culture. [3]

Regardless of how the popular culture is evaluated, it is still the most popular culture in China's current society. The deep reason is that it is inseparable from the post-modern culture of Chinese society.

On the one hand, the films and television dramas adapted from Internet Literature subvert the traditional classical plot and lofty narrative, and makes the discourse right of folk culture return. Popular culture has become a culture with the same status as elite culture. On the other hand, such works also consciously resist the centralization and advocate the decentralization of the underlying narrative.

Desire culture is a kind of culture advocated by popular culture and a cultural lifestyle advocated by post-modern society. The release of desire culture makes films and television dramas become channels for ordinary people to pursue independent and free life. The desire in this kind of films and television dramas often manifested in the aspects of wealth, status, rights, love and superpower.

Commercial attribute is the main attribute of mass culture. But this commercial culture is generated by the ordinary people in their practice and creation of production and life, and is regarded as a living experience of the people, rather than the capitalist industrial society that a large scale to deceive and deceive the masses commodities. [4] The main manifestations of films and television dramas adapted from Internet Literature are the entertainment of themes, the popularity of audiences and the popularization of language.

As described above, the films and television dramas adapted from Internet Literature not only have the de-centralism under the influence of post-modernism, but also have the catharsis of human nature and the construction of desire. At the same time, they show the consumerist characteristics. This article combines specific films and television dramas to analyze these characteristics, discusses the problems, and puts forward suggestions.

## **2. Results and Discussion**

### **2.1 . De-centralism Under the Influence of Post-modernism.**

As China's Internet has become more deeply involved in daily life, the Internet has gradually affected everyone who contact with it. In the new cultural context, Internet Literature and film have surpassed their own media attributes, resulting in a kind of cultural attributes with the post-modernism.

The basic characteristics of post-modernism are mainly to dispel the center and the whole. [5] Concerned about the Internet Literature, the most remarkable thing is that the Internet Literature

resist and dispel the traditional literature, which leads to the return of folk discourse and the reconstruction of popular culture.

Before the boom of Internet Literature, the writing and appreciation of literature had always been the privilege of elite cultural circle. The standard of literary excellence and the right of discourse of aesthetic paradigm had also been firmly grasped by these elite cultural groups. The right of folk discourse of literature had been absent for a long time. Until the rapid development of Internet media, Internet Literature has broken through the inherent aesthetic paradigm and communication channels of literature. Through the Internet media, the Internet Literature has spread among the masses of the people, and realized the return of discourse.

On the one hand, virtual cyberspace gives every netizen an equal participation status, which gives the public without the right to speak a chance to publicize their personality and express their opinions. In Internet Literature, whether it is online writing, colloquial language, or casual narrative style, all reflect the spirit of equality of popular culture. Secondly, the anonymity of online writing can make writers more free to express. They regard online writing as a means to realize their "presence value". Furthermore, the Internet breaks the monopoly of traditional literature on the channels of publish, a large number of literary websites provide e-publishing opportunities for writers. Moreover, with equal dialogue and huge reading groups, the Internet Literature has gained much higher audience groups than traditional media, and has produced great commercial value.

Decentralization is actually a desire for reconstructing the folk and the underlying discourse. While the core plots of many Internet Literature adapted television dramas mostly show the "counterattack" of small people, which can be traversed by chance and can acquire super-ability by coincidence. For example, Zhang Xiaofan, a humble rural teenager, became a "savior" of magic, in the television drama "Qingyun Zhi" adapted from the Internet novel "Qixian".

## **2.2 . Construction of Desire Culture.**

The desire for money and wealth. This kind of Internet Literature and its adapted television dramas often show that the protagonists who are poor and dumb get a lot of money through chance coincidence, and realize their dream of wealth overnight. For example, a famous novel "Back to the Ming Dynasty as the King" tells the story of the hero who has become a lucky boy with wealth all over the world.

The desire about status and rights. The Internet Literature expressing the desire for rights mostly focus on traversing dramas and plot dramas, and the traversing dramas are mostly common plots for ordinary men through traversing to ancient times to gain the status of rights. Such as "Tang Brick", "Back to the Ming Dynasty as a King" are all expressing this theme.

The desire to acquire superpower. Under the philosophical trend of materialism, the description of superpower in modern and contemporary Chinese traditional literature is absent, and it was not until the advent of Internet Literature that this gap was filled. In Internet Literature, the desire of the protagonist to gain superpower is the desire of people to break through the limits of human body.

The desire of sex. After the emergence of the Internet platform, Chinese netizen' desire to express sex has reached an unprecedented level. A large number of pornographic pictures, novels, movies have flooded on the Internet. Even under the strong supervision of the competent authorities, many websites still use ambiguous headlines as the attraction of harvesting the attention of netizen.

Similarly, the description of sexual desire is an important attraction of Internet literature. But in the film and television dramas adapted from Internet literature, the expression of sex is far less straightforward than in the Internet literature. This is determined by the attributes of the two media platform. The millions of words of a online novel, whether the competent authorities or the published network platforms, can not examine whether the sexual description of each novel is too exposed. But most of the broadcast platforms of film and television dramas are traditional media, and even the videos broadcast on the Internet are subject to strict official censorship.

### 2.3. The Profound impact of Commercialization

In the post-industrial civilization era, the development of commodity economy stimulates to the popular culture, and the Internet economy gave birth to the image-reading culture.

On the one hand, under the influence of consumption culture, "the culture and art that people are facing is no longer a cultural form related to society, religion and reality in the pre-capitalist era, but a cultural consumption era that depends on machine replication and mass production of cultural industry. Therefore, the main purpose of culture at this time is not for the spirit, but for consumption. This will inevitably lead to the vulgarization and commercialization of art.[6]The acquisition of commercial interests has always been the main motivation for the adaptation of film and television dramas by Internet Literature. Because, as an extremely important part of popular culture, under the market operation mechanism, when domestic film and television creation suffers from the perplexity of "hard to find a good script" for a long time, the Internet Literature achieves its visualcommunication, which has a deeper audience base than the production of general film and television works, and occupies the market.

Whether it is television or film, commercial interests are its greatest feature. The coincidence between Internet Literature and film production conforms to the spirit of entertainment and commercialization in the fast food era. Since 2003, literary websites have begun to realize their own commercial operation. Driven by the "fast food" era and the economic benefits of the industrial chain, online literary adaptation of film and television works has been clearly supported by the market.

In terms of audiences, compared with traditional literature and film, Internet Literature and its adapted films pay more attention to the audiences' experience. Both the online novel and the online movie and TV series are based on the audience's aesthetic reading and viewing needs. Among them, the obvious concern is to female audiences, because the main audience of network movies and TV dramas is female groups. Therefore, when choosing the adaptation theme of Internet Literature, in order to attract this part of the audience, producers often choose those network novels which show the dominant position of women. For example, the "Songs of Fire", the heroine is a woman and the heir of the fiery volcano villa.

In terms of language, the film and television works adapted from online fiction also use popular and colloquial language, such as the earlier traversing drama "Searching for the Qin Dynasty", in which the protagonist, Xiang Shaolong, speaks the Wulitou language of modern Hong Kong, which is a good example.

On the other hand, the image-reading culture, which is stimulated by the Internet economy, makes people more keen to obtain information through images and images. When reading online

novels, readers need to read a sentence completely before they can understand its meaning. Moreover, in this process, readers need to make full use of their knowledge reserves, past experience, values and so on, in order to construct a text image in the brain. But image has the characteristics of intuition and visualization. Without abstract thinking and image construction, the viewer can directly know the meaning of image expression through the image itself. Moreover, images can be recognized by all individuals who have the ability of visual recognition without the restriction of words and symbols on knowledge, region and so on. In the fast-paced post-industrial civilization, the superficial and intuitive image can quickly and effectively disseminate information. This fast-paced, sensory and non-deep carrier satisfies the needs of the information society and becomes the main information carrier in this era.

In addition, the visualization of images has brought shocking visual spectacle impact to the viewers. This has also become the most anticipated place for the audience in the process of online novel into film and television. Those films adapted from online literature with vivid special effects and rich colors are popular with the audience. Many of them have become peripheral products of film and television, which further expands the commercial benefits of adapting films and TV works from online novel. But we should also see that, unlike the image constructed in the reading of Internet Literature, the image constructed in the image brings a strong visual experience of wonder, at the same time, the audience loses deep thinking. The audience can only accept the image cognition in the director's and camera's minds, which is a kind of obliteration of the audience's imagination and creativity.

### 3. Conclusions

Internet Literature and film and television drama are both a kind of popular culture, and this kind of popular culture has obtained the same cultural discourse rights as the elite culture. With the increasing popularity of post-modern culture in Chinese society, it has profoundly changed the aesthetic tendency of Chinese people. The artistic standard of films and television dramas adapted from Internet Literature has also been gradually improved. Chinese Internet writers and directors are also constantly examining their original intention of creation, seeking a new balance between the economic benefits and artistry of their works, so that this popular culture will have a greater impact on the development of China in the future.

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