

An Interpretation of the Aesthetic Characteristics of Hong Kong Martial Arts Literature from the Perspective of "Flying Fox in Snow Mountain"

Zhang Min*

*Institute of Meteorological Humanities, Nanjing University of Information Science and Technology,
Nanjing, Jiangsu, China
473873143@qq.com
corresponding author

Keywords: Jin Yong, Hong Kong Literature, Martial Arts Novels

Abstract: As a master of Chinese martial arts novels, Jin Yong is fluent in writing and quick in thinking. On the basis of absorbing the creation and aesthetic experience of traditional martial arts novels, he also draws on the western creative methods and literary theories. Mr. Jin Yong integrates tradition and modernity, and develops in succession in artistic style, providing a model for the study of the aesthetic characteristics of Hong Kong's martial arts culture. His work "Flying Fox in Snow Mountain" presents the aesthetic characteristics of Hong Kong's "New Martial Arts" novels from three aspects: language aesthetics, theme aesthetics and narrative aesthetics.

1. Introduction

"Flying Fox in Snow Mountain" is a martial arts novel written by Jin Yong in his early years, which was published in 1959. Because the novel chooses a unique narrative mode, and this narrative mode is the first for our traditional martial arts novels and Jin Yong's other martial arts novels. Therefore, readers' comments on this book are also mixed. The high-level readers appreciate Jin Yong's writing style, the middle-level readers appreciate his charm, and the lower-level readers appreciate his plot. However, because the narrative style of "Flying Fox in Snow Mountain" is very strange, some readers do not appreciate this work very much, while the critics have a high evaluation of this work, and think that it has made the greatest breakthrough in both martial arts novels and Chinese novel tradition." [1]

2. Language Aesthetics

The inheritance of modern and contemporary novels to Chinese traditional culture is still relatively weak, but many people have learned from Jin Yong's works and supplemented the traditional culture of ancient Chinese culture, chivalrous morality and so on. Jin Yong himself likes Chinese traditional culture very much, so although he wrote popular novels, he mixed classical aesthetics, full of book aroma and rich cultural knowledge in his language. "Flying Fox in Snow Mountain", both for scenery and for people, uses only a little ink, but can vividly outline the picture.

At the same time, Jin Yong is also good at writing lifeless words, and using film techniques to make the words full of visual sense and film sense, as shown in Figure 1.

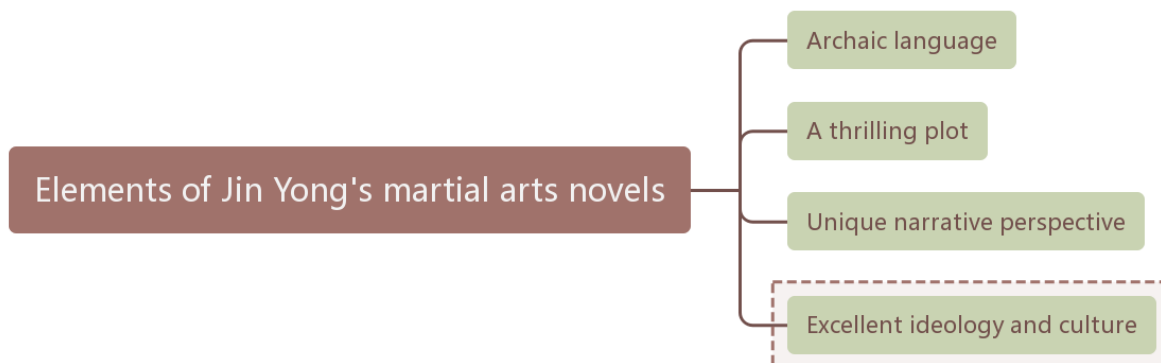


Figure 1: The composition of Jin Yong's martial arts

2.1. Elegant Text Presentation in Customs

As a place for the ruling class to enjoy and live, the brothel shows us the life picture of the upper class. Jin Yong often reveals the personality characteristics of the characters through different language habits, characteristics, contents and ways of speaking in the work of "Flying Fox in Snow Mountain", presenting a humorous, concise, satirical and critical aesthetic implication. [2] For example, the appearance of the character "Bao Shufu" shows a lewd image in front of everyone. The book wrote: "But when I saw him with a pair of triangular eyes, a flat nose and a crooked mouth, a pair of white eyebrows slanting and drooping, his appearance was indecent and strange, his eyes were covered with red silk, and he looked like an old bachelor in the market only..." In a few words, his image of a despicable scoundrel was very vivid [3]. Another example is that when the heroine appeared, the author described it with "the pearl is dizzy", "the jade is shining" and "the book is fresh". In just a few words, the author sketched out an intelligent fairy on earth, as shown in Figure 2.

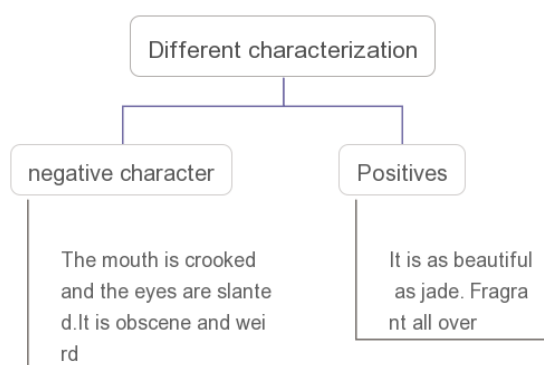


Figure 2: Language in characterization

With profound classical literature skills, Jin Yong created a beautiful artistic conception in line with the traditional Chinese aesthetic habit of "integrating things with me". Therefore, the novel contains a wealth of historical knowledge, geographical background, Chinese cultural traditions and human customs. He displays the beautiful and poetic aspects of Chinese culture very well.

Therefore, the flying snow and jade brush in "Flying Fox in Snow Mountain" can vividly display the natural scenery of Changbai Mountain in China. This profound knowledge of classical literature makes his writing especially capable of creating a beautiful artistic conception in line with the traditional aesthetic psychological habits of Chinese people [4], so that readers can immerse themselves in the atmosphere he creates.

2.2. Visual Language of Combination of Dynamic and Static

Jin Yong often uses highly intuitive words in his novels to give people a visual sense, so that readers can be in the scene and make the novels more "alive". The use of Jin Yong's novels for reference to western film art makes his novel language have a strong sense of picture. In order to further strengthen the picture effect of the text, Jin Yong sometimes uses the "freeze frame" technique similar to that in film art to make the scene in the pen form a sculptural effect. [5]

"The sky pierced into the neck of a flying wild goose. The wild goose took the feather arrow in the air to fight a few catties and fell on the snow. Ten feet away from the west end, four horses were riding on the white snow and running fast. The passengers immediately heard the sound of the arrow, and all of them pulled back together. The four horses were tall and fat, and stopped immediately when they were restrained. The riders were both skilled in riding, and the animals were also trained. This pulling back of the horses appeared to be on the saddle and under the crotch, complementing each other." Writing and scenery are fully visual language, which makes readers feel like they can see with their own eyes. [6] When writing about the Jade Pen Hall, the language of the novel is more like the montage technique in the film. This language flexibly alternates between the modern and the past, and interlaces between the stories. When Jin Yong writes about fighting in this novel, he often breaks down the very fast action into many slow actions, as if to give readers a detailed and wonderful explanation. When writing scenes, they are described from far to near, from various angles, just like many cameras in the film, aiming at different scenes, adjusting different distances and angles, and changing various shooting methods, so that the description of complex scenes in the novel appears to be hierarchical and not monotonous. [7] Jin Yong used the film art to participate in the narration, so that the text has the general sense of scene and three-dimensional sense of film, and the language presents the visual characteristics, and there is movement in silence, as shown in Figure 3.

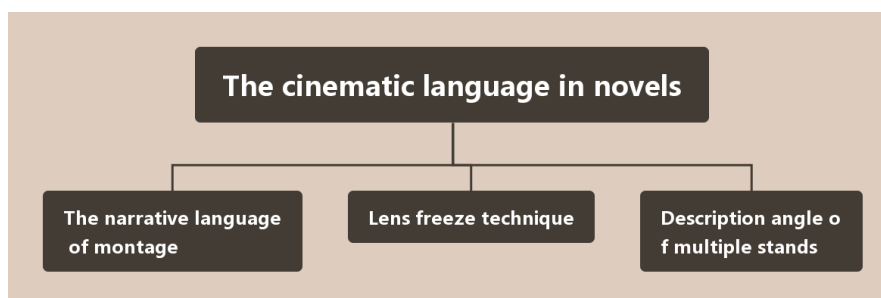


Figure 3: The Expression of Film Language in Jin Yong's Novels

3. Theme Aesthetics

The theme can be said to be the spiritual core of martial arts novels, but there is a high similarity in the theme disclosure of martial arts novels in Hong Kong. Jin Yong's "Flying Fox in Snow Mountain" only uses more than 200000 words, which reveals the goodness and evil in human nature while narrating the revenge story, providing a model for the spiritual aesthetics of modern and contemporary martial arts novels. [8]

3.1. The Dark Side of Human Nature

The novel "Flying Fox in Snow Mountain" reveals selfish human nature deeply. First of all, the novel profoundly reveals the loss of human nature under the temptation of power. For example, the Ruan Shi of Tianlong Beizong used the secret that Tian Qingwen, the daughter of the leader Tian Guinong, gave birth to an illegitimate child as a bargaining chip to gain power, and asked Tian Guinong to surrender the leader's position to himself; Yin Ji of Tianlong Nanzong wanted to force the north and south to become one and make himself a unique leader. Secondly, the novel describes a group of people who can kill each other, even their relatives, friends, brothers, fathers and sons, under the temptation of money. In the snow mountain treasure of "Snow Mountain Flying Fox", all the characters who participated in the meeting showed greed, which was a deep exposure of human instinct and desire. Everyone in this group has it, which fully demonstrates the universality of greed and desire. [9] The novel describes that when the treasure was found in the cave, no matter officials, monks, Xiake, robbers, everyone was red in the eye. In the underground cave, everyone killed each other for the treasure in chaos [10].

In addition, the novel also profoundly reveals the proposition of the loss of maternal love. After giving birth to an illegitimate child, Tian Qingwen strangled the baby alive for fear of revealing the matter. Tian Qingwen said to the dead baby, "Son, don't blame your mother's hand for killing you. My mother's heart hurts even more than a knife cut. But if you live, my mother can't live. My mother is so cruel, I'm sorry for you." This self-talk in the dark is creepy. People in life can harm the interests of everyone, including their own children, for their own benefit, which profoundly reveals the selfishness of human nature. [11] The author also borrowed Miao Ruolan's words and said, "I don't know who is really a good person in the world except for your father and you." Again, through the language of the novel, he reflected on selfish human nature. There are many greedy, shameless, despicable, dark and bloody elements throughout this book. Jin Yong himself said that one of the themes of his creation is the dark side of human nature, as shown in Figure 4. [12]



Figure 4: Dark humanity in Jin Yong's novels

3.2. Revenge and Chivalry

Because of the certain nature of revenge in traditional stories, there are few plots that confuse the enemy. The object of revenge in martial arts novels is often wrong. Because of the wrong object,

the plot of revenge also becomes absurd and unreasonable, which makes justice impossible. Just like the elders of Miao and Tian in "Flying Fox in Snow Mountain" were not killed by Hu Yidao. Revenge has become a routine in martial arts novels, which has long aroused people's consensus. Therefore, the main narrative theme of "Flying Fox in Snow Mountain" is carried out around the endless revenge of several families, which corresponds to the enduring theme of Hong Kong martial arts novels.

At the same time, when dealing with the relationship between friendship and hatred, traditional stories always write about how friendship serves revenge, and the success of revenge benefits from friendship. However, martial arts novels have carried out original thinking on the relationship between the two. [13] Therefore, the two great heroes, Hu Yidao and Miao Renfeng, in the "Flying Fox in Snow Mountain", have a sympathetic friendship that transcends hatred. Although they hate real friends, their hatred is external and inherent, but their friendship is free and comes from the nature of chivalry. "Friendship is more than hatred". In Jin Yong's works, the real Great Xia is almost not careless in revenge. Whether the revenge can be correct and righteous has become an important standard to measure "Great Xia" in the martial arts novels. [14] Through generations of revenge stories, the novel highlights Hu Yidao's "justice in the body" and "heroism", integrates the revenge motif and chivalrous spirit, and highlights the specific aesthetic choice of the theme of Hong Kong martial arts novels at that time.

4. Narrative Aesthetics

The characters in "Flying Fox in Snow Mountain" have formed a complex relationship of mutual examination. The narrators have observed the old grievances and new enmities between the main characters in many ways. They are not only in different perspectives, but also at different levels, which determines the aesthetic value of the novel's three-dimensional structure. Similar to the current "script killing", it presents the characteristics of the innovation of the martial arts culture in Hong Kong at that time, it was also an aesthetic example of Hong Kong's "new martial arts" novels at that time.

"Flying Fox in Snow Mountain", a narrative way in the form of in-role perspective, has borrowed from the Japanese film "Rashomon" to some extent, that is, adopted a narrative perspective of "eyewitness providing evidence". [15] In the novel, the author mainly adopts the third person narrative method used in traditional martial arts novels and the background of the novel "the early Qing Dynasty", which effectively maintains the objectivity of the story. The author skillfully arranges different characters to narrate different stories and the same story in the first person. This kind of person enables the reader to imagine and extend the story from all aspects. Seeing it with his own eyes greatly increases the authenticity and credibility of the fictional story. Therefore, the reader has a more thorough understanding of the whole story. The change of the narrator makes the work not as monotonous as the traditional fixed-person narration, and the whole narration has a broader space and time, which not only broadens the artistic vision, expands the artistic capacity, but also strengthens the freshness and expressiveness of the work, and brings rich and colorful narrative atmosphere, as shown in Figure 5.

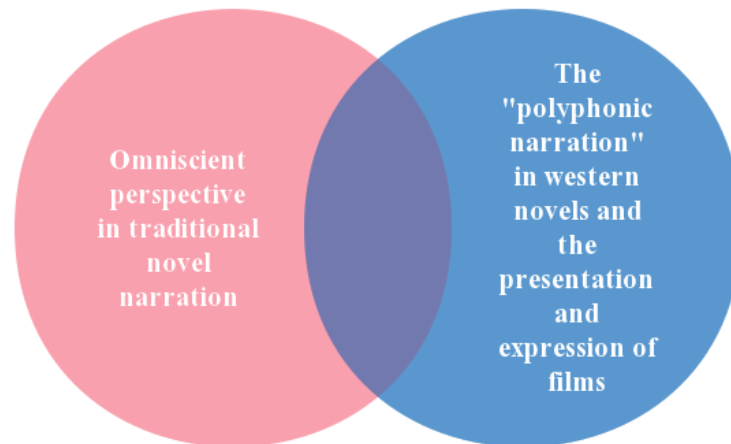


Figure 5: The Origin of Narrative Art of "Flying Fox in Snow Mountain"

From ancient times to the old times, based on the influence of traditional Chinese narrative, the omniscient and omniscient narrative mode is generally adopted. In the development of the new martial arts novels, influenced by the evolution of the narrative mode of Chinese novels and the western literary and artistic theories, the narrative mode has changed from single to diverse. On the one hand, Jin Yong absorbed the essence of traditional novels, on the other hand, because he learned western literature, film and drama, he took the traditional omniscient mode, and at the same time, he boldly used a variety of perspectives, greatly expanding the connotation and expression of martial arts novels.

5. Conclusions

As one of the representatives of Hong Kong's new school of martial arts, Jin Yong has studied traditional literature and western literary and artistic theories, film and television drama techniques to some extent, and integrated them into his works, which greatly enriched the expression of the novel and widened the depth and breadth of writing. As one of Jin Yong's representative works, *Flying Fox in Snow Mountain* has elegant, concise and visual language, the theme of reflecting the good and evil of human nature and love and hate, as well as the narrative method combining modern and traditional, highlighting the aesthetic characteristics of Hong Kong martial arts novels at that time, such as elegance, visualization, authenticity and westernization.

Acknowledgements

This paper is the phased achievement of the Jiangsu Province graduate research and innovation project "Cultural character and contemporary value of Nanjing landscape poetry" (project number: KYCX22_1230).

References

- [1] Zeng Huiyang. (2020) *Reconstructive translation of Jin Yong's English version of martial arts novels from the perspective of Mona Baker's narrative theory*. Fujian Normal University.
- [2] Qu Lili. (2022) *Audience imagination of literary legend and media carnival*. Northeast Normal University.
- [3] Luo Nan. (2020) *Research on the falsification of Jin Yong's personal language style and suspected works based on statistics*. Central China Normal University.
- [4] Wang Ru. (2022) *I can travel freely in the world -- on the spirit of Taoism embodied in Jin Yong's novels*. *Chinese Literature*, (06): 62-69.

- [5] Shao Bin, Shi Huilin. (2022) *Linguistic evidence of literary canonization: the daily life of key words in Jin Yong's novels*. *Zhejiang Academic Journal*, (04): 211-220.
- [6] Chen Anfeng. (2022) *The enlightenment of martial arts in the late Qing Dynasty and the new realm of Jin Yong's martial arts novels*. *Nandu Academic Forum*, 42 (01): 35-45
- [7] He Dahai. (2021) *The inheritance and innovation of Chinese classical novel elements in Jin Yong's martial arts novels*. *Journal of Beijing Printing Institute*, 29 (03): 76-78.
- [8] Liu Jingyu, Chu Jinbo. (2022) *On the time narration and representation of Jin Yong's martial arts novels*. *New Reality*, (18): 11-13.
- [9] Li Huichuan. (2022) *Constructing the "Classics" of Wuxia Fiction -- On Yan Jiayan's Study of Jin Yong's Fiction*. *Journal of Capital Normal University (Social Science Edition)*, (05): 121-129.
- [10] He Ping. *Not all missing persons in literary history are losers*. *Novel Review*, 2023 (01): 41-42.
- [11] Wu Kan. *The English translation strategy of Jin Yong's novels "going out" -- Take Mo Jinping's translation of Flying Fox in Snow Mountain as an example*. *Appreciation of Masterpieces*, 2016 (15): 145-147.
- [12] Yu Wenfu. (2022) *The dualism of Jin Yong's novel aesthetics*. *Contemporary Literature*, (03): 120-125.
- [13] Song Kuai, Zhou Zongkui. *Analysis of the hero's chivalrous behavior in Jin Yong's martial arts novels from the perspective of psychology*. *Journal of Changjiang Normal University*, 2023, 39 (01): 114-121.
- [14] Qu Lili. (2022) *Audience imagination of literary legend and media carnival*. *Northeast Normal University*.
- [15] Fang Huai. (2022) *An Analysis of the Characteristics of Jin Yong's Works*. *Writer's World*, (23): 11-13.