



A Study on the Change of Postmodernism in Quentin Tarantino's Films

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Abstract: Quentin Tarantino is one of the main representatives of postmodern films. For the narrative angle of the story, the characterization of the film, the language expression, the value proposition, the scene layout, the aesthetic performance, etc., all have their own exaggerated and amazing understanding and artistic director ability. Choosing director Quentin Tarantino's film as the main research object of the paper for in-depth case analysis is the proper choice for studying post-modernist films. This paper mainly compares Quentin's early and late works, and finds that there are obvious differences between Quentin's use of postmodernism from the beginning of his creation and the use of postmodernism in his late creation. This paper explores the changes in the use of postmodernism in Quentin's early and late films from the aspects of narrative mode, aesthetic presentation, film metaphor, and makes corresponding comments on Quentin's transformation.

Keywords: Nonlinear Narration, Violence Aesthetics, Quentin Tarantino, Film Metaphor, Postmodernism

1. Introduction

Quentin grew rapidly into an outstanding director in the 1990s. He is proficient in non-linear stories, verbose dialogues, and bloody scenes, inheriting the absurd violent style of American B-level films, and thus becoming one of the most influential directors in the entire 1990s American film revolution. He is known throughout the film industry for his unique perspective and in-depth understanding of film and art films. From a motivational and professional perspective, Quentin's works bring a different sense of satisfaction to people. He is talented and proficient in all film languages and genres, but never limited by any rules or regulations. His movies are not perfect at all, but their works are very avant-garde. Countless high-quality camera scenes have been created, allowing fans to experience unprecedented excitement and comfort.

The practical significance of this article lies in Quentin's transformation towards postmodernism. For other directors or scholars, can Quentin's change indicate that the techniques of postmodernism are not perfect and have many shortcomings, which led Quentin to make corresponding compromises and make adjustments to postmodernism in his own films. This can be reflected in "Evidence of Death," "Shameless Bastards," and "Django Unchained." Is Quentin's change worth learning from for directors in China who are trying to make postmodern style films?

2. Literature review

According to relevant research, the term "postmodernism" first appeared in Frederick de Hornost's 1934 work "Selected Poems of Spain and Latin America, 1882-1922", meaning rebellion against modernity. As a cultural category, postmodernism embodies the critical spirit of modernism and classicism, as well as the new principles of human cultural revival. Postmodern film works often no longer sing heroic hymns, but instead focus on the lower classes. The style of the entire film belongs to Impressionism, with various fragmented images, and using creative methods such as plot, irony, and humorous imitation that are different from conventional ones, it vividly displays its questioning and criticism of the modern value system. There are many characteristics of postmodernism, among which absurdity is the most representative, which is also very common in postmodern films.

3. Research design

Previous studies have focused on Quentin's one or two works to study the works themselves or to extend the research. However, this article uses a postmodern perspective to discuss the plot content, narrative style, film aesthetics, audio-visual language, content metaphors, and other aspects of Quentin's early works, including "The Fallen Dog," "Pulp Fiction," and "Kill Bill," as well as his late works, including four films: "Evidence of Death," "Shameless Bastard," "Django Unchained," and "The Bad Eight." It aims to identify the differences between Quentin's early and late works. To study Quentin's creative process based on this distinction and draw conclusions.

4. The Postmodern Characteristics of Quentin's Early Films

In postmodern films, Quentin is the most representative director, and the postmodernism portrayed in his films is beyond doubt. His non-linear narrative, violent aesthetics, absurdity, parody, and other film techniques are undoubtedly stunning. The academic community attaches great importance to the postmodern elements in Quentin's films and has actively conducted extensive research in sociology, communication studies, and other fields; At the same time, director Quentin was gradually hailed as a master by fans for his unique style, receiving high praise and striving to emulate him.

Starting from the earliest version of 'The Fallen Dog', fragmented flashbacks filled the entire film to narrate the story, and analyses of human nature were everywhere. Complex gangster characters, highly impactful violent aesthetics, and humorous dialogue were all important components of Quentin's films. Later, in "Pulp Fiction," the circular narrative structure divided into chapters was used to depict the unity and incompleteness of the entire world, using visual and auditory means to eliminate the negative impact of violent behavior, deeply infecting the audience's emotions and achieving great success. Analysis of 'Kill Bill' reveals that the narrative technique of the work continues the characteristics of the previous work, still using the technique of reverse narration and interlude, with bloody and violent fight scenes being the main part. Compared to other films that directly depict or reduce bloody scenes, Quentin showcases the aesthetics of violence in his own way. He uses his unique artistic technique to weaken the bloody scenes while increasing the audience's level of shock. Visually speaking, the scene of Kiel gasping on the ground is depicted in black and white tones at the beginning, with a pure white veil paired with black blood, which can give the audience a unique aesthetic experience that they have never had before.

5. The Transformation of Quentin's Late Films

Moving on to Quentin's later films, he made changes and transformations to certain aspects of the film. Firstly, in "Evidence of Death," he did not use non-linear storytelling as usual, but instead chose a flat narrative. However, he still retained a hyper realistic portrayal of the subject matter, extracting violent content from violent behavior and only showcasing the outside of violence. Such scenes have a unique aesthetic. After 'Shameless Bastards', Quentin's non-linear narrative changed again, becoming a multi chapter narrative with two main lines as the main focus. This has a high similarity with 'Pulp Fiction', but in terms of time and space, except for a few flashback scenes, the entire film still follows the timeline of the past, present, and future. In terms of violent aesthetics, this film is different from Quentin's previous works. The violent aesthetics of first expressing and then suppressing are appetizing in the plot. Django Unchained "is a later work directed by the director, which uses a flat approach in storytelling, supplemented by a certain amount of flashback narration. The aesthetic of violence still uses the style of the past, and the directness of metaphor has also improved. Quentin said, "If you carefully analyze slavery, you will find that it is very absurd and cruel. You cannot imagine that this system really existed in human history, which is also the core content of surrealism. He used his description of Django's rescue process to inspire the audience's enthusiasm for reflecting on slavery, humanity, freedom, and fate. In 'The Bad Eight', it can be said that it is not only the most distinctive work of Quentin's directorial career, but also Quentin's most special work. In 'The Bad Eight', Quentin recklessly expresses his understanding and creativity of Western films. Quentin's iconic chatterbox, sudden death, violence, black humor, episodic film form, and stunning music are all expressed in Quentin's films.

6. Conclusion

So the transformation of Quentin's late works lies in the shift towards narrative, violent aesthetics, and film metaphors. In terms of narrative, Quentin's narrative style in late works continues to change, but it is not difficult to see that the narrative structure is more compact and no longer as irregular as before. In terms of violent aesthetics, 'Shameless Bastards' can be seen as a dividing line, and it was only then that Quentin truly began to tell stories entirely through audio-visual language rather than dialogue. In this film, Quentin effectively solves the problems of sluggish dialogue scenes and immature audio-visual language that he had previously encountered. At the same time, his representative "tribute to the old film" part does not lose its integrity, allowing the audience to feel this effect. In 'Django Unchained', the combination of the unique realism of blood and flesh flying in big scenes and the thrill of explosions also made the audience feel exhilarated. The combination of the oppressive atmosphere in the first film of "The Bad Eight" and the release in the second film is just right.

In terms of film metaphors, Quentin's films combine historical background as the theme to make the metaphors of the film clearer. The metaphors told from "Shameless Bastards" are similar to his title, using the background of World War II to tell the story of people being shameless Bastards. In 'Django Unchained', the audience is shown the ugly posture of white slave men in the upper class of capitalist society, as well as the bumpy journey of foreign black slaves daring to resist, pursue freedom, and regain freedom in the mid-19th century. And the contemplation of justice, the distortion of human nature in extreme emotional spaces, and the dilemma of cooperation among men in "The Bad Eight".

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