

The Application of Psychoanalytic Theory in Films, Based on the Movie Fanfan

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Abstract: The relationship between psychoanalytic theory and film is very close, open and integrated with each other. The psychoanalytic study of film is an important part of the study of contemporary western film theory. Through the mastery of psychoanalytic theory and the analysis of the film Fanfan starring Sophie Marceau, this paper proves the application and role of psychoanalysis in film.

Keywords: Psychoanalysis; Subconscious; Desire; Mirror; Psychoanalyst

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1. Psychoanalysis and film

As a comprehensive art reflecting human survival activities, film has not been separated from the track of the development of psychoanalysis since its birth. Psychoanalysis theory and film were conceived, born and developed in almost the same historical period. In the book *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, Freud directly pointed out the relationship between psychoanalysis and film art. He believes that film is the most suitable art form for presenting psychoanalysis. With the cooperation of light and shadow art, the individual spiritual world can be presented concretely, and people can also obtain the possibility of direct perspective^[1]. If psychoanalysis is the “mirror” for human beings to understand themselves, then films are the “mirror,” which expands the vision of human beings to observe the external world, so as to have a more macro understanding of themselves and their external society.

The introduction of psychoanalytic theory for creation and research can undoubtedly enrich the connotation of film art to a great extent. Among them, Freud’s psychoanalysis theory and Jacques Lacan’s mirror theory are important theoretical resources. Therefore, this paper starts from this, interprets the characters in the film Fanfan, and excavates the bright and hidden corners.

2. Alexandre’s “cage”

At the beginning of the film, Alex met Fanfan for the first time. Then Alex returned to his residence and opened the door to see that he had many pets, including little crocodiles, geese, chickens, rabbits and lambs. Among them, little crocodiles, geese and several chickens were placed in cages. These animals have different symbolic meanings, which is the embodiment of Alex’s “subconscious.”

Freud believes that the subconscious is an existence beyond the consciousness, which dominates almost all individual thoughts and activities. The reason why it is difficult to be found is that the subconscious is deeply hidden under the surface of the individual consciousness, like a pair of invisible hands to manipulate and dominate people’s thoughts and behaviors. Wherever the consciousness works, it is secretly entangled

by the subconscious ^[2]. Come back and see what kind of subconsciousness does Alex's pet embody?

The first thing Alex did when he got home was to lift the cloth covering the crocodile cage and feed the crocodile meat. The crocodile reacted very ferociously when he saw the meat, which startled Alex. This ferocious crocodile, which is locked in a cage and covered with cloth, is the symbol of Alex's subconscious. The ferocity of the crocodile expresses its desire for meat and its strong dissatisfaction and resistance to being locked in a cage. It seeks opportunities and tries to break free. Like Alex's desire for sex, indulgence has to be suppressed. Freud's subconscious will not be constrained by the law and moral baptism in social culture, but follows the "Pleasure Principle" and blindly pursues the satisfaction of desire. However, due to the complexity of the objective world, it is very dangerous to indulge desire blindly. Therefore, under the conscious regulation of self-protection instinct, Reality Principle replaces Pleasure Principle. Reality Principle replaces the Pleasure Principle for the purpose of self-protection, delaying the realization of happiness and temporarily tolerating the existence of unhappiness, so as to obtain happiness. However, people's various behaviors should eventually obey the Pleasure Principle. Various possible ways of Pleasure Principle restrict people's behavior from different aspects. In the film, Alex's fiancée Lori is that his subconscious is suppressed and should follow the realistic principle of breaking through. Alex wants to make out with her. She always says, "I want to, but I don't have time. We're going home to eat with our parents." At this time, the helpless Alex was like a crocodile in a cage who wanted to resist but could do nothing. Then they will get married and have children, and form a secular happy family, just like a group of chickens in a cage, which looks happy, clever and lovely.

It should be noted that subconsciousness means that people have potential psychological activities under the sober consciousness. It contains all kinds of primitive and animal instinctive impulses and desires related to all kinds of instincts that are not allowed by human social ethics and religious laws. Zizek calls it a "storeroom" of wild and illegal drives, unsatisfied emotional experience, instinctive desire and impulse are suppressed into the subconscious, but they are not willing to stay there, but are actively active in the subconscious, constantly seeking a way out and pursuing satisfaction ^[3]. "I'm afraid that the brown haired girl who hasn't been touched by you can't see me when you touch me. We often quarrel over trifles. If I'm not your person, I'll love me again. What's wrong. Let me have a baby for you." "His fiancée Lori is a cage trapped and repressed by Alex's subconscious desire. In his eyes, Lori is boring and no spice." She falls into a secular life. She listens to her parents' arrangements and doesn't understand Alex. She even wants to have children to solve problems and bind Alex. This will only make Alex want to break free more. In getting along with Fanfan, the author found that Fanfan is completely opposite to Lori. Fanfan is full of vitality, beautiful and sexy, and has a rich and interesting life. In the future, she will become a perfumer. Her smell must be a unique and good smell of women, which naturally brings out Alex's sexual desire. As a woman, Lori uses men's cologne, it can be reasonably speculated that when Alex is with her, there will be an illusion of being with the same sex. It virtually suppresses Alex's sexual desire in the subconscious. The more repressed, the greater the power of resistance, and eventually break through the imprisonment, because the subconscious pursues and obeys the Pleasure Principle. When the individual's Pleasure Principle is not practiced for a long time. That is, the subconscious representing the real thought of the individual will break through the defense line of consciousness and appear in a deformed way, which is doomed to the final separation of Alex and Lori.

3. Alex's view of love

In Alex's concept of love, making love means the end of love. When he met Fanfan, he was confused, and his heart lit up the flame of true love. We can see his love concept from his dialogue with his friends, "I met a girl who made me confused and full of vitality, a little magical and unpredictable; But after making love, the stimulation disappears, and the teasing process no longer exists. Can you have another choice?"

“I have come up with a way... I want to be free from stereotypes and boredom with Fanfan. I intend to pursue Fanfan forever, but I don’t always let her know my love. I won’t make love with her in my lifetime. Why have a relationship with her? Later, I became an ordinary man. With the warmth of the beginning, I want our love to never change, free love, which is moving. I will get interesting when I am fascinated.” Alex’s concept of love is to pursue it all his life, but it does not involve lust, and love is separated. Why does Alex have such a strange view of love? How did his personality and behavior come into being?

We can analyze why Alex thinks that love will disappear after making love with his lover, so he wants to chase Fanfan forever, but doesn’t let her know and get close to her. This goes back to Alex’s childhood. Alex personally told Fanfan that every morning when he was a child, his mother’s door was not closed, he would see different men with her every day. According to Lacan’s psychoanalytic theory, he was in the “mirror stage.” He learned that his mother’s desire for the penis in his father’s name, but he could not meet his mother’s desire, which caused his pain. The mother constantly changes sexual partners. This is his “mirror”. What kind of “image” will he recognize in this “mirror” to determine his position? Little Alex mistakenly brought himself into the mirror. He didn’t know that the subject he saw was not real himself. He wanted to be the object of making up for the missing mother’s desire, but he found it impossible, and the frequent replacement of his mother’s sexual partner made him fear, fear of sex, fear of women, and fear of his image as a penis and his sexual desire. That’s why he doesn’t have sex with women in the face of sexual desire. Lacan emphasizes the role of the father and puts the father in a position that can give the mother desire. If the mother does not know the father in the position of law, the child will obey the mother’s wishes ^[4]. The father who satisfies little Alex’s mother’s desire constantly changes the object, and he is not the father known in the legal position, so Alex’s view of love follows his mother. Subconsciously, he thinks that after sexual relations, there is no freshness, and love no longer exists. He needs to constantly change the object of desire, or keep a distance from her forever, so that he can love her forever, always pursue, not boring.

The film shows the impact of childhood trauma on Alex. This impact does not disappear because of the protagonist’s growth in age and the advancement of work and life, but has been deeply trapped in the ocean of fear and unable to get out of the strange circle of thinking. As a result, he makes some unusual strange behaviors, which can be found in psychoanalytic theory. The film does not directly explain the situation of Alex’s father. His biological father is never present. He lives with his mother since childhood. A person’s lack is his desire. He lied that the mansion was his father’s home. After Fanfan saw through it, he said, “He’s a banker, just be my father.” It can be seen that Alex wanted him to have a real father with decent work and good economic conditions. Why should he have such an illusion about his father? According to Lacan’s interpretation of desire, desire is the desire of the other, because illusion is constructed by the desire of the other. Alex’s performance just confirms this. At this time, the great other in Alex’s heart is Fanfan. He wants to please Fanfan. He thinks Fanfan will like men with good family conditions. This kind of man is the desire in Fanfan’s heart, so he pretends to be so. He thinks Fanfan’s desire has become his desire.

Another impressive scene in the film is the single-sided glass mirror. After several disputes, Fanfan decided to leave Alex. In order to live together with Fanfan and not make his love for Fanfan disappear due to physical intimacy, Alex rented the house next to Fanfan, smashed the wall between the two rooms and replaced it with a single-sided glass mirror. Fanfan saw herself in the mirror, Alex can see Fanfan’s every move clearly through the glass, but Fanfan knows nothing about the other side of the mirror. Mirrors are very expressive in movies. In this way, Alex quietly observed Fanfan. Fanfan danced in the mirror. Alex danced in imitation of her. Fanfan took a bath, and he took a bath. This greatly satisfied Alex’s desire to peep. Alex peeped through a single-sided glass mirror at the covered scenes.

Lacan believes that: Desire pursues the goal that will be lost forever. To be precise, the function of

fantasy is to maintain desire rather than satisfy desire. Gaze is a projection of desire and a process of obtaining desire satisfaction in imagination. Alex “sees” Fanfan through a single-sided glass mirror. Metz puts forward that there are two ways to “see”: “Mutual view” and “one-way view”. The former is a kind of impure peeping, and the latter is a kind of complete peeping [5]. Alex belongs to complete peeping, and is satisfied with directly peeping at objects that cannot be obtained. Alex’s gaze at Fanfan makes Alex escape from the symbolic order and enter the imaginary relationship. He returns to the mirror stage again. Through his gaze at Fanfan through the glass mirror, he returns to his gaze at his mother’s room in a trance. He desires his mother, but his desire will not be satisfied through staring, but maintains his desire to have his mother through imagination, Both enjoyment and pain. This is consistent with his gaze at Fanfan. Alex looks at his desire object Fanfan with his eyes, obtains pleasure from it, falls into his fantasy and maintains his love for Fanfan, which does not satisfy his desire. In his gaze, Fanfan is always absent and deficient.

In the film *Fanfan*, Alex brings the audience’s mood to a climax through the cohabitation life with Fanfan through a single-sided glass mirror. Alex peeps at Fanfan’s every move through a glass mirror, but Fanfan doesn’t know who is peeped. When Fanfan on the side of the mirror began to dance to the happy music, Alex imitated her movements and jumped up; When Fanfan takes a bath in the bathtub, Alex takes a bath with her; At this time, the audience brought themselves into the role of Alex. Alex’s peeping is actually that the audience is peeping and enjoying the sexual pleasure brought by peeping. At this time, Fanfan picked up the phone, and Alex’s phone suddenly rang. It was Fanfan who called. Alex was startled, and the audience was also startled. For fear that their peeping with Alex would be discovered by Fanfan, interrupting their fantasy and the pleasure of satisfying their fantasy desire. Through these lenses, the director successfully unifies Fanfan’s life on both sides of the glass mirror with Alex’s peeping behavior, and extends this peeping to the eyes of the audience outside the screen. So as to tightly grasp the audience’s peeping psychology, and use Alex’s fascination with peeping to attract and drive the hearts of the off-site audience. In this way, the director brought the audience into the ranks of peepers, but the audience did not realize that they took advantage of the peeping tendency hidden in people’s hearts.

4. Conclusions

Through the analysis of the whole article, it can be seen that the film “*Fanfan*” was shot under the guidance of psychoanalytic theory. The integration of film and psychoanalysis has formed a special internal framework for the film, so that people who are increasingly lonely can find instinctive catharsis and emotional disclosure in the film, make the audience have empathy, and double the aesthetic feeling the film brings to the audience. With the development of society, the increase of people’s mental pressure and the improvement of audience’s cultural quality, the market shows a high mood of spiritual demand. The integration of psychoanalysis provides help for the audience to understand and appreciate the deep connotation of films. Now the integration of psychoanalysis and film and television works is the general trend.

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Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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