The Act of Seeing and the Narrative:

On the Rise and Decline of Wulitou 无厘头*'s Popularity*

in China

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INTRODUCTION

0.1 *Wulitou* as a Popular Style of Narrative in China

"床前明月光, 疑是地上霜, 举头望明月（啪！响木一敲），我叫郭德纲。"[1] （"So bright a gleam on the foot of my bed, could there have been already frost? Lifting my head to look, I found that it was moonlight (Pa! A sound of Ringwood knocked), My name is Guo Degang") ---- These lines above are taken from the article by Mao Weimin's 毛伟敏 and Wei Yu's 魏雨 *"Wulitou" You Laitou*《"无厘头"有来头》 (*The Original Meaning of Wulitou*), as a typical example for *wulitou*. The *Xiangsheng* 相声(Peking talk show) comedian Guo Degang 郭德纲 recited the first three lines of the poem "*Jing Ye Si*" 静夜思 (*In the Quiet Night*) at the opening of his show, just to replace the last line of this famous poem with an introduction of himself by casually "chopping" off the original last line which reads "低头思故乡" （"Sinking back again, I thought suddenly of home."）, using the fact that his name fits in the rhyme scheme of the poem perfectly. When parts of the content (the first three lines in the quotation above) which is about a beautiful scene of moonlight seen and described by the famous poet Libai 李白 in Tang Dynasty of ancient China, and the self-introduction of Guo Degang himself (the last line in the quotation above), the two different things, are "brutally" placed together as it was done above，a *wulitou* 无厘头 narrative is thus created, and shows us the following most notable features which appear often in *wultiou* 无厘头 narratives: "**dislocation**" (in the quotation above, the link between the first three sentences and the last sentence goes off the normal causal/logic route); and "**anachronism**" (in the quotation above, a contemporary person's self-introduction is "misplaced" in a scene happened in ancient China).

A *wulitou* narrative generally contains a hefty dose of comedy, for the "dislocation" and the "anachronism" which appear in *wulitou* narrative can usually create a strong

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[1] Mao Weimin 毛伟敏 and Wei Yu 魏雨, "Wulitou You Laitou"《"无厘头"有来头》"The Original Meaning of Wulitou", In "Yao Wen Jiao Zi"《咬文嚼字》(2006.07), P23-P24

comic effect. And as a special comedian style of narrative, the popularity of *Wulitou* 无厘头 is undoubtedly one of the most interesting and not-to-be-missed cultural phenomenon in China during the past 20 years or so.

In 1990s, with the screening of Zhou Xingchi 周星驰 (Stephen Chow)'s *wulitou* films, *wulitou* developed from a Cantonese[2] local saying into a widely accepted term to describe a type of humor or a style of narrative in the Chinese speaking areas; and then at the end of 1990s, being synchronized with the rise of the internet and the popularization of personal computers in China, *wulitou* entered into its heyday in China, rapidly became a buzzword and one of the most popular styles of narrative.

Take for example a popular *wulitou* style web series in China from 2013-2015《万万没想到》(*Unexpectedness*), the data relevant to it shows: since it began to be broadcasted online in 2013 to the time when the first two seasons were finished in 2015, "播放量共计超过 20 亿" ("the play times of it has already totaled over 2 billion")[3]; and in 2013 it was selected by the Chinese internet audiences as "2013 网络第一神剧" ("The Top 1 Chinese Web Drama in 2013")[4]; in 2014 it got the accolade as "2014 最受大学生瞩目网络剧" ("The Most Attractive Web Series in 2014") at the "2014 中国大学生电视节"("China Student Television Festival 2014")[5].

Through the use of "anachronism" and "dislocation", *wulitou* narrative departs from the temporal, spatial, and causal patterns in classical narratives. "Classical design displays the temporal, spatial, and causal patterns of human perception, outside which the mind rebels." [6] ---- Apparently, what Robert McKee says above is not applicable to *wulitou* narratives. As an abnormal style narrative, why can *wulitou* be popular in China? Or in other words, how should we interpret the popularity of *wulitou* narrative in China?

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[2] A variety of Chinese spoken in Guangdong and neighbouring areas such as Hongkong and Macau.

[3] Xun Chao 荀超, " 'Wanwan Mei Xiangdao' Huigui, Wang Dacui Zoushang Resheng Dianfeng"《<万万没想到>回归，王大锤走上人生巅峰》, 04, Nov. 2015，《华西都市报》(West China City Daily), From http://media.people.com.cn/n/2015/1104/c40606-27773815.html

[4] Luo Anji 洛安吉, " 'Wanwan Mei Xiangdao' Pin Shenme Chengwei 2013 Wangluo Diyi Shenju?"《<万万没想到>凭什么成为 2013 网络第一神剧？》From http://news.mtime.com/2013/11/28/1521112.html

[5] "Daxuesheng Dianshijie Bimu, Wanwan Zui Shou Daxuesheng Zhumu"《大学生电视节闭幕 <万万>"最受大学生瞩目"》, 27, Oct. 2014, From http://hebei.ifeng.com/detail_2014_10/27/3066324_0.shtml

[6] McKee, Robert (1997). Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting. New York. P62

0.2   Story, Narrative and Schema

Before we go further into discussion, it's necessary to give a definition for narratives. In many cases the term "narrative" is taken as a synonym for "story", for example, in his book "*Narratives in Popular Culture, Media, and Everyday life*", Arthur Asa Berger writes: "A narrative is, as I have suggested, a story, and stories tell about things that have happened or are happening to people, animals, aliens from outer space, insects ---- whatever."[7]   While as Edward Branigan says, "Although it will often be convenient to use the word 'narrative' to refer to an end result, or goal, one should not forget that this final product ('here is a narrative') arises from a particular and ongoing (narrative) method of organizing data. Thus the word 'narrative' may refer to either the product of storytelling/comprehending or to its process of construction."[8]   That is, narrative may also refer to the "process of construction" ---- storytelling, which as the American sinologist Andrew H. Plaks（浦安迪）defines in his book《中国叙事学》(*Chinese Narrative*) written in Chinese: "简而言之，叙事就是讲故事"[9]("In short, narrative is storytelling. ")

No matter if we take it as a *product* of construction ("story"), or as a *process* of construction ("storytelling"), one thing is certain: narrative is inseparable with story. Thus how we should interpret the concept of narration can be under the same premises of how we look upon the definition of story ----what is story? Why do "we" humans love stories (especially fictions)?

Borrowing the term "demand for order" used by Claude Levi-Strauss, herein I suggest that an important driving force of the human love for stories originates from the human "demand for order". More concretely, an important driving force of the human love for stories originates from the natural instinct of human beings to find/build relations/orders between things and ourselves, and therefore to order chaos and explain

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[7]   Berger, Arthur Asa (1997), "Narratives in Popular Culture, Media, and Everyday life", California: SAGE publications. P4

[8]   Branigan, Edward (1992), "Narrative Comprehension and Film", New York: Routledge. P3

[9]   浦安迪 (Andrew H. Plaks) (1996),《中国叙事学》("Chinese Narrative"), Beijing: Beijing University Press. P4

the world, for chaos or disorders means unmanageability and danger, which are instinctively rejected by human's consciousness. Thus, as a synonym for "story", or the process of constructing a story (storytelling), narratives can be taken as an universal way for interpreting the world constructed upon sets of relations, it is "a perceptual activity that organizes data into a special pattern which represents and explains experience"[10], it "furnish(es) us with both a method for learning about the world and a way to tell others what we have learned"[11].

And since "story" is about "things that have happened or are happening to people, animals, aliens from outer space, insects ---- whatever."[12] ---- the key word here: "happen", is a verb word which implies a sequence of actions/events in relation to specific times-spaces, it means normally the relations that construct a narrative are contextually embedded in the specific "time-space setting" that things happen, or in other words, the time-space setting defines and confines the explanations for how and why things happen in a story ----That is what makes narrative distinguish from other ways for explaining the world, for example, the logico-scientific way, through which "the explanation is extracted from spatial and temporal events"[13].

If we take narrative as an interpretation of the world constructed upon sets of relations/orders, the common recurring relations/orders between things and ourselves, which are extracted from the perceptual experiences we interact with the world, must be inevitably integral to the construction of narrative ---- to borrow the term of cognitive science, I interpret these common recurring relations/orders as "schemata". Just like a house can't be built without its building frame structures, without the schemata extracted from the perceptual experience we interact with the world, it is impossible for a narrative to be constructed ---- Schemata function in a narrative as the underlying framework for the organization of data.

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[10] Branigan, Edward (1992), "Narrative Comprehension and Film", New York: Routledge. P3

[11] Berger, Arthur Asa (1997), "Narratives in Popular Culture, Media, and Everyday life", California: SAGE publications. P10

[12] Berger, Arthur Asa (1997), "Narratives in Popular Culture, Media, and Everyday life", California: SAGE publications. P4

[13] Berger, Arthur Asa (1997), "Narratives in Popular Culture, Media, and Everyday life", California: SAGE publications. P10

0.3 The Deconstruction of Schema in *Wulitou* Narratives

Viewing from the perspective of schema, the most prominent features of the *wulitou* narrative "**anachronism**" and "**dislocation**" can be summarized as one point: ***the deconstruction of schema.***

Firstly, by using "**anachronism**", *wulitou* narrative deconstructs the normal spatio-temporal schema in narratives. As we have stated above, normally the time-space setting of a story defines and confines the relations or orders for how and why things happen in a story. Thus, once the "time-space setting" of a story is determined, the events and scenes, and the dialogues, behaviors, even dressings of the roles in the story should conform to the "setting" of the story, to keep the whole story logical and convincing ----This is normally how human beings construct a narrative.

While on the contrary, as ***anachronism***, one of the most prominent features of *wulitou* narrative has shown us that, *wulitou* narrative seems to be keen on breaking the confinement of the space-time setting. That is, for anything, it is of no concern whether it conforms to the "space-time setting" of a story or not, it still has the possibility to be put in the *wulitou* narrative. Even more it is a crucial element of *wulitou* narratives. For example, to let a modern cigarette appear in the left hand of Tang monk (a person who lived in Tang Dynasty of ancient China) as it did in the web series "*Wanwan Mei Xiangdao*"《万万没想到》("*Unexpectedness*") (2013-2015); or to let the logo of "Chanel" (a modern brand) appear on the hat wear by an imperial doctor in ancient time as it did in the web series "*Taizifei Shengzhi Ji*"《太子妃升职记》("*Go go my princess*") (2015). The things from different space-times, just like favourite objects in boxes, seem as if they can be taken out from the space-time they originally belong to, and be assembled together arbitrarily into the same scene in *wulitou* narrative, while without considering the space-time confinement of the "setting" of story seriously, the effect of ***anachronism*** is thus created.

Secondly, what is deconstructed in *wulitou* narratives, usually are not only the normal spatio-temporal schema, but also many other schemata ---- As "**dislocation**", the other prominent feature of *wulitou* narrative shows, the arrangements of data in *wulitou* narratives go off the normal pre-given connection way often, in other words, the links between things in *wulitou* narratives are often out of the audience's expectations, which means, the normal relations/links between things (schemata) are thus usually deconstructed ---- especially the social-cultural schemata which represent the classical/old "mainstream" conventions/norms, and appeared often in classical stories.

The deconstruction of these schemata are usually achieved through the use of parody. Take as an example the film *Guochan Ling ling Qi*《国产凌凌漆》（*From Beijing with Love*) (1994), which is a film parodies the film *James Bond 007*. Different from the film *James Bond 007*, in this film, the hero/ protagonist is no longer a national official agent, but a vendor selling pork; and the appearance of the hero/protagonist looks neither handsome nor charming, rather, sometimes he even looks dirty since he is chopping pork; and his behavior doesn't look smart and chic, rather, sometimes he looks somewhat stupid and funny ---- In this way, the old schema of hero thus was deconstructed ---- That is, to be a hero is not necessary to be related with cool and charming image, or in other word, the link between "a hero" and "the image of a hero" goes off the pre-given connection way, and the effect of *dislocation* is thus created.

Similar examples widely exist in other *wulitou* narratives. No matter in the *wulitou* films, for example, "*Dahua Xiyou*"《大话西游》("*A Chinese Odyssey*") (1994); or the *wulitou* novels, for example, "*Shaseng Riji*"《沙僧日记》("*Saseng's Dairy*") (2003); the *wulitou* TV series, for example, "*Wulin Waizhuan*"《武林外传》("*My Own Swordsman*") (2006); or the *wulitou* web series "*Wanwan Mei Xiangdao*"《万万没想到》("*Unexpectedness*") (2013)…the trace of parody and the deconstruction of the social-cultural schema which represent the classical/old "mainstream" attitudes/values, can be found easily in all kinds of *wulitou* narrative forms.

My question is: why are *wulitou* narratives keen on the deconstruction of schemata? And why can a narrative of this style get so popular in China?

0.4   The Act of Seeing and the Construction of Narrative

Imagine there are two persons who chose two dramatically different paths to walk separately into the same forest, since what they met and saw along the paths might be different dramatically, the narratives (stories) they gave about the forest therefore will obviously be different.

That is, the construction of narrative through which the world is interpreted is under the premise of what and how the world can be "known" by us ---- especially, what and how the world can be seen by us, which as the saying goes: "what we get is what we see". Different acts of seeing (what we see and how we he see) may lead to different constructions of relations/orders between things, and therefore different narratives. In this sense, it might be said that what and how we see, decides what and how we narrate.

However, "it is not the case" for our eyes to "be open to all the possible inputs available in the world"[14] ---- "We only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice."[15] Thus, the world we learn about, just like the "world" projected by the firelight in Plata's cave, are mostly confined by what can be "chosen" to be seen by us.

And the act of "choice" of our sight has never been completely "free", it is usually controlled by our perception and living environment: it might be confined by the biological characteristics of our visual system, for example, to compare with mantis shrimps, "The mantis shrimp has far more advanced vision than humans", for "mantis shrimps are open to flows of electromagnetism (light) that are all but non-existent for human beings. They are structurally open to flows entirely invisible to us because of how their eyes and nervous system are put together"[16]; It might also be confined/influenced by the geographical environment we live in, for example, if we live in a desert area in our whole life, it is almost impossible for us to choose to see the ocean with our own eyes.

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[14] Levis R. Bryant, "Onto-cartography: An ontology of Machines and Media" , P54
[15] Berger, John (1972). Ways of Seeing. London.
[16] Levis R. Bryant,"Onto-cartography: An ontology of Machines and Media", P55

While nowadays, for most of us, the factors that change the act of "choice" of our sight most obviously are none other than the technology and social environment. Firstly, the technology and social environment can define and change the objects humans "choose" to see, for example, to compare with our ancestors (or the people living in premodern conditions), most of us today seldom choose to pay much time to observe the biological surrounding around us, for the modern technological and social living conditions are keeping us away from nature; but meanwhile they may also expand the objects we can choose to see by breaking the physical spatio-temporal confinement and "extending" our eyes, for example, with the inventions of the "media"[17], such as photographs, automobiles, railways, televisions, etc., we have the chance to choose to "see" more scenes in the distance.

As it is said above, what and how we see, decide what and how we narrate, if narrative is to be considered as an interpretation of the world constructed upon sets of relations/orders, then the popularity of *wulitou* narrative implies there must have occurred some changes to the act of our seeing, which made some of the old/classical schemata (relations/orders between things) no longer suitable for the experience how we interact with the world, and therefore have to be deconstructed, so that the new ones can be reconstructed.

So, to explain the popularity of *wulitou* narrative in China, it is necessary for us to firstly have a look of the changes which happened to the act of our seeing (what to see and how to see) at the time when *wulitou* narrative began to become popular in China.

0.5 The Rise of the Internet and *Wulitou* Narrative

Viewed from the perspective of the act of seeing, at around the end of the second millennium when *wulitou* narrative began to become popular in China, the most prominent changes that happened to our act of seeing might be caused by none other

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[17] Following McLuhan's definition in "The media is the extensions of man", herein, the "media" refer to all kinds of technological inventions which extend man's perception ("any extension of ourselves")

than "*The Rise of Network Society*"[18]: A society which "is made of networks in all the key dimensions of social organization and social practice."[19]

At the end of the 1990s, the internet began to get popular in China. Similar with "the carnival"[20] proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin, with its characters of decentralization, interactivity and anonymity, the rise of the internet offered the average Chinese internet users a completely different, nonofficial "second world" to express themselves. Not only that, what followed the rise of internet are also a series of major social, technological, economic, and cultural transformations, which means the surroundings presented before Chinese were being dramatically changed. As a result, it seemed that almost overnight, all diverse expressions/views rarely read before were now surging up, and lots of phenomenon rarely seen before were also now being shown online, which means what the Chinese internet users can choose to "see" now is dramatically different from before ---- it is getting much broader or multidimensional, while much more chaotic. Thus the "mainstream" attitudes and values once dominated Chinese society now naturally have to face serious challenges: it is getting harder for them to prevail in society ---- The relations between things that people built before are now going out of order.

How are people going to react when they find they are suddenly in a "disorder" world? Most possibly, they will get anxious firstly, for as we said before, human's consciousness instinctively reject chaos of orders. Under this circumstance, the popularity of *wulitou* narrative at this time seemed a matter of course ---- as a style of narrative, which generally contains a hefty dose of comedy, *wulitou* narrative is widely regarded as a useful way to calm down the wide spread emotion of "anxiety", and release its viewers from the psychological tension and anxiety.

For example, in his article, "Zhou Xingchi Xianxiang Yanjiu" 周星驰现象研究 (*On the impact of Stephen Chow's films*), by taking Stephen Chow's film (a typical representative of *wulitou* style film) as analysis object, Tan Yaming 谭亚明 takes 无厘头意识 ("*wulitou* consciousness") as a reflection of "世纪末的焦虑与反叛" ("the

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[18] Castells, Manuel (2010), The Rise of the Network Society.-2nd edition, UK.

[19] Castells, Manuel (2010), The Rise of the Network Society.-2nd edition, UK. Pxvii- Pxviii

[20] Bakhtin, Mikhail (1984), Rabelais and his world, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, P5-P6

anxiety and the revolt in the end of 20th Century"). Similarly, Shao Zhufeng 邵珠峰 pointed out, that "周星驰独特的'无厘头'风格，能够让观众在观影过程中畅快淋漓的大笑，可以暂时忘却自我，在轻松欢快之余放松身心，缓解长期的精神和生活压力。" ("By making the audiences laugh heartily, Stephen Chow's unique *wulitou* style provides a space for the viewers to forget about themselves temporarily, relax their body and mind in a relaxed and happy way, and alleviate long-term mental and life stress.")[21]

While anxiety is not a fundamental solution to "disorder", for the people being in a "disorder", what they need to do most importantly is to re-find and rebuild orders again. And as a way for humans to arrange the orders/relations between things and ourselves, narrative at this time, naturally becomes an important means for people to reach this goal. But firstly, what they need to do is to deconstruct the old orders/relations ----That may explain why *wulitou* narratives are keen on the destruction of schemata, and show a subversive attitude to the old social-cultural schemata which represent the classical/old "mainstream" conventions/norms and powers.

The point is that the explanation above might help us understand the widely use of **dislocation** in *wulitou* narratives, but it might not be enough to help us explain the widely use of **anachronism** in *wulitou* narrative ---- why **anachronism** is widely used and accepted in *wulitou* narrative?

Before we answer the question, it must be made clear that it's definitely not the first time for anachronism to appear as a narrative device in Chinese narratives. In fact, at least as early as in the middle of Ming Dynasty (around 450 years ago), "anachronism" already appeared in Chinese narratives. If we take it as a narrative norm that what and how the data are arranged in a narrative should be defined and confined by the time-space setting of the story, the use of anachronism, which deliberately break the time-space confinement in a narrative, therefore, of course can also be interpreted as a struggle against norms/rules and powers. In this sense, it should not be a surprise for us

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[21] Shao, Zhufeng 邵珠峰,"Zhou Xingchi Wulitou Dianying De 'Jiegou' Xing""周星驰无厘头电影的解构性"("On the Character of Deconstruction of Zhou Xingchi's Wulitou Films")，In "Dianying Pingjie" "电影评介"(2014.08). P10-P13

to notice the deliberately use of "anachronism" in narratives ---- especially during the periods when the society went through intense transformations and people were eager to deconstruct the old orders and rules.

While, anyhow, what we should note is that, if we take narrative as an interpretation of the world, "anachronism" obviously does not comply with the perceptual ways in which we experience the world, therefore, no matter how long "anachronism" already existed in narratives, it seems that there was little possibility for "anachronism" to become popular in narratives. And this fact was evident: for a long time, in Chinese narratives, the "anachronism" always existed in narratives with a marginal status.

But this time, surprisingly, it is not others, but "*wulitou*" style narrative, with "anachronism" as one of its prominent features, that successfully became one of the most popular style of narrative in China in the last 20 years. The point here is not when and why anachronism appeared or existed in narratives, but **why it can be popular?** --- in the last 20 years in China, why is it "*wulitou*" narrative that suddenly become popular in China, rather than other styles of narratives?

If it is as what we said: "what and how we see, decide what and how we narrate", then, in a society of a given historical period, for a specific popular style of narrative, its popularity means there must be some particular way of seeing corresponding to it and being widely accepted by most people. Or in other words, a specific popular narrative style, can be viewed as the manifestation of the popular way of seeing in the society of a given historical period. In this sense, the widely use and acceptance of "anachronism" means there must be some particular way of seeing corresponding to it has gotten popular, but what is it?

To answer the question, we need to go back to the topic about media, for as we have stated above that, viewed from the perspective of the act of seeing, at the time when *wulitou* narrative began to become popular in China, the most prominent changes happened to our act of seeing might be caused by none other than the rise of a specific media ---- the internet.

Media can not only define and change "what we see", but can also work on "how we see" (the way of seeing). When it comes to the effect of media on "how we see", what

comes to our mind might firstly be the different perspectives of view that the "contents" of media convey to us. While, as Marshall McLuhan says, "the medium is the message", thus what we are considering here, are mainly "the change of pattern" that media introduce into the way of our seeing, rather than the perspectives of view that the contents of media convey to us.

As it is noticed, a given medium always calls for a special pattern/way of seeing to adapt to it, for example, the way of seeing that the book calls for is a type of "continuous linear" way; while the movie tends to shift the way of humans' seeing from the "Specialized segments of attention" to "total field".[22] As a consequence, the way of seeing humans get used in a particular historical society, might also be strongly influenced and shaped by the communication features of the dominated media in this historical society.

So, to ask "what changes happened to the way of our seeing with the rise of internet", or "what is the specific way of seeing corresponding to the popularity of "anachronism" in *wulitou* narrative", we might as well ask firstly: "what kind of way of seeing does the internet call for?"

Interactive and multimedia hypertext are the most important communication features of the internet, which enable us to "jump" often between different contents, and mix up everything, without being restricted by the physical spatio-temporal confines. As a consequence, on the internet, the physical law of space-time seems to lose its effect, time becomes "timelessness", space becomes "the flows of space"[23]. "Simultaneity" becomes the dominant existing state of things, which as Manuel Castells writes : "…the mixing of times in the media, within the same channel of communication and at the choice of the viewer/interactor, creates a temporal collage, where not only genres are mixed, but their timing becomes synchronous in a flat horizon, with no beginning, no end, no sequence." [24] Here the physical confinement of the time-space in our daily reality has therefore lost its efficiency.

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[22] McLuhan, Marshall (2013). Understanding the Media - The Extensions of Man. California. P23
[23] Castells, Manuel (2010). The Rise of the Network Society.-2nd edition. UK. P406
[24] Castells, Manuel (2010). The Rise of the Network Society.-2nd edition. UK.

And once our minds get used to the "timeless time" and "the flows of space" in the internet-based "multimedia" system, it will be naturally manifested in the way of how our minds arrange the data we learn ---- for example, the way of our narration. In this sense, it will not be difficult for us to understand why at the time when the internet got popular in China, **anachronism** as a narrative device, which intentionally breaks the confinement of time-space and let the things originally came from different time-space appear "simultaneously" on the same scene, began to be widely accepted and used often in *wulitou* narratives.

But the question remains: if it is as what we said that the popularity of *wulitou* has close affinity with the internet, then question is: Why *wulitou* became popular in China rather than in the developed countries of Europe and North America, even though the internet services in these countries might have been more advanced than in China?

0.6 *Wulitou* Narrative and Chinese Native Cultural Context

In this thesis, I propose that for most of the people in developed countries (for example, the Europeans), who live in highly modernized societies and are used to the way of seeing characterized by classification, sequence/linear and logic, when the internet brings its non-linear, fragmented views appeared with it in their lives, what challenged them most was not what they see online (**what to see**), but how to get used to the way of seeing (**how to see**) the internet calls for.

While the special cultural context in around the end of 1990s, when *wulitou* as a style of narrative became popular in China, was a cultural mixture of the historic premodernism, the unfinished modernization and the new postmodernism. Therefore, for most of the Chinese, when they face to the world online, what challenged them most was not how to get used to the way of seeing (**how to see**) the internet calls for, but how to overcome the cultural shock brought by what they were seeing (**what to see**) online ---- amounts of different views online would unavoidably challenge the mainstream concepts and values or attitudes of the traditional (premodernism) Chinese culture and

modernism culture they accepted since their childhood. And based on this background, *wulitou* got popular in China. (I will discuss this issue more detailed in Chapter 4)

In conclusion, *wulitou*'s popularity in China can be taken as the product of the interaction of the two forces: the changes happened to the act of our seeing accompanied with the rise of the internet; and the special cultural context in China in around the end of 1990s.

As an effective way to struggle against old rules/conventions and powers, in the last 20 years, *wulitou* narrative usefully deconstructed the classical/old "mainstream" attitudes and values, and made the views of Chinese are more open and inclusiveness. While since the old conventions are getting deconstructed by *wulitou* narratives, it means *wulitou* narrative may be gradually not as necessary as before now for the Chinese internet users, especially for the new younger generations, who grew up with the internet, which freed them from traditional cultural rules, and have got used to seeing multi-cultural phenomenon since their childhood. As a result, as we noticed, the popularity of *wulitou* is getting declined now in China. But of course that is not the whole story. The development of media technology may also play an important role in the declination of the popularity of *wulitou* in China.

0.7   Key Notions and Chapter Outlines

As shown above, the notion of the act of seeing is basic to my study in this thesis. The integration of the notion of the act of seeing with a study of narrative is premised on the full recognition that the act of seeing is not merely an action, but more importantly a cognitive process.

The studies concerning the human act of seeing as a cognitive process are not rare, especially in the field of cognitive science, epistemology, phenomenology, psychology, aesthetics, cross-cultural comparative studies. In the books, such as *Analysis of Sensation* (Ernst Mach, 1902), *Phenomenology of Perception*, (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 1945), *Knowledge and Culture* (Zhang Dongsun 张东荪, 1946）, *Ways of Seeing* (John

Berger, 1972), *In the Blink of an Eye* (Walter Murch, 2001), *The Geography of Thought* (Richard E. Nisbet, 2003), *Onto-cartography: An ontology of Machines and Media* (Levi R. Bryant, 2014), we can find the contents concerning the human act of seeing as cognitive process easily. Even so, when it comes to the field of narratology, the perspective of the human act of seeing is still seldomly adopted to explain the formation of different narrative styles.

This situation possibly results from an widely accepted assumption that "Everyone has the same basic cognitive processes"[25], or in other words, "all human groups perceive and reason in the same way"[26]. Thus, "when people in one culture differ from those in another in their beliefs, it can't be because they have different cognitive processes, but because they are exposed to different aspects of the world, or because they have been taught different things"[27]. Similarly, according to this assumption, it can also be deduced that when some style of narrative in one culture (or a given historical period) differ from those in another culture (or another historical period), it can't be because both the narrators and fans of this style of narrative have different cognitive processes, but because they are exposed to a different world, or because "they have been taught different things".

However, this assumption is increasingly recognized as unreliable. In recent decades, The studies on comparative cultural psychology reveal that "Human cognition is **not** everywhere the same"[28]. This also applies to the pattern of the human act of seeing as a cognitive process. The new findings above on cultural comparative psychology cast light on the explanation of the formation of different narrative styles, and will serve in this thesis as a theoretical premise for my study.

The point is **how** to integrate the act of seeing into the study on the formation of narrative styles? Claude Levi-Strauss pointed out in his famous work *The Savage Mind*

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[25] Nisbett, Richard E. (2003). The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently…and Why. New York. P xiv

[26] Nisbett, Richard E. (2003). The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently…and Why. New York. P xiv

[27] Nisbett, Richard E. (2003). The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently…and Why. New York. P xiv

[28] Nisbett, Richard E. (2003). The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently…and Why. New York. P xvii

that the "demand for order" is the foundation of "all thought". Through case study, this thesis will further suggest that the "demand for order" is not only the foundation of "all thought", but more essentially, a natural instinct of human beings, from which the human passion for stories (especially fictions) and story creations stems. That is, the human passion for stories and story creations are intimately related to the natural instinct of human beings to find/build relations/orders between things and ourselves to order chaos and make sense of the world. Therefore, as the common recurring relations/orders between things extracted from our perceptual experiences that give coherence and structure to the world around us, "schema" will be integrated naturally into the narratives and therefore become another key notion in this thesis to integrate the act of seeing into the study on the formation of narrative styles.

Drawing upon the interdisciplinary fields of cognitive science, cognitive linguistics, cognitive aesthetics and archetypal criticism, through the theory analysis and the example demonstration, this thesis will prove that the organization of data in narratives is guided by the recurring patterns of our perceptual interactions (schemata). Or in other words, schemata function in a narrative as the underlying framework for the organization of data.

When we try to examine narratives from the perspective of the human act of seeing, the notion of spatio-temporal dimension will also naturally become notable, for everything happens in space and time, each act of seeing always implicates a particular spatio-temporal dimension.

Basing on the researches on comparative cultural psychology by Richard E. Nisbet, and being enlightened by the ideas on aesthetics by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, it will be suggested in this thesis that, the data organization in narratives generally possesses "dual operations", where one mainly operates in the temporal dimension, while the other mainly operates in the spatial dimension.

And when the data organization in a narrative has a preference for the operation in the spatial dimension, the relations between objects that "juxtaposed in space" will be prominent; while when the data organization has a preference for the temporal

dimension, the objects that "flow in the time", and therefore the classification and causality, or the chronological and causal progression will be highlighted in it.

If narrative is to be considered as a product or a process of the construction to organize data into a special pattern which represents and explains experience, the spatio-temporal dimension of the human act of seeing must be manifested through the "dual operation" in the narratives, or in other words, different patterns of the human act of seeing must be manifested through the organization of data in spatio-temporal dimension in the narratives.

Here we take *Hong Lou Meng* 红楼梦 (*In Dream of the Red Chamber*), known as one of the great classical Chinese literature as an example. One of my German friends once told me: "I can't finish reading *In Dream of the Red Chamber*!" She says, "there are so many characters and the relationships of the characters are so complex, it is too difficult for me to read it !" What the friend of mine pointed out in fact is the significant feature of the data organization in the *In Dream of the Red Chamber*: The spatial organization of the elements (such as, characters, the relationship of characters, places, etc,) are highlighted in this novel and make the data arrangement in this novel tending to the spatial dimension.

The *In Dream of the Red Chamber* is definitely not a single case. In fact, as Andrew H. Plaks suggests, "空间化" ("spatial") [29] is a common feature of the narrative construction in classical Chinese literatures. To make a comparison between the construction of narrative in classical Chinese literatures with the typical traditional pattern of Chinese act of seeing, which as Richard Nisbett found: "pay more attention to the environment"[30], "notice many more changes in the between objects"[31], it might be concluded that the construction of narrative in classical Chinese literatures generally manifest the typical traditional pattern of the Chinese act of seeing.

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[29] 浦安迪 (Andrew H. Plaks) (1996),《中国叙事学》("Chinese Narrative"), Beijing: Beijing University Press.

[30] Nisbett, Richard E. (2003). The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently… and Why. New York. P95

[31] Nisbett, Richard E. (2003). The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently… and Why. New York. P93

The study on media and the human act of seeing as cognitive process is another integral part of my thesis. Basing on the studies concerning media by Marshall McLuhan, Walter Benjamin, Susan Sontag, Levi R. Bryant, in this thesis, it will be emphasized that media can confine and change the human act of seeing from both the aspects of "what to see" and "how to see", which further confine and change the schemata extracted from the perceptual experience we interact with the world. And since the effect and influence of media, as Marshall McLuhan suggests "will vary from culture to culture accordance the existing sense ratio in each culture"[32], when it comes to the media's effect and influence on the human act of seeing, and furthermore, the formation of different narrative styles, the notion of "cultural context" will thus be given special emphasis in this thesis.

On a final note, no matter if we take it as a product (story), or a process (storytelling), since narrative is such a wide-ranging concept (literature, theatre, comedy, speech, journalism, film, television and video, radio…as well as comic strip and some music and songs…even people's daily oral conversations, jokes or humor…all these forms of human creativity, art, and entertainment, as long as a story is presented within, might be interpreted as having a narrative structure), it is impossible to let all forms of narrative be study objects and be included in this thesis. Thus, considering *wulitou,* the main research subject of this thesis, is a cultural phenomenon which began from films and boomed online, in this thesis I will mainly choose the visual narrative text (the films and web series) as examples and analysis objects to do my study.

The thesis will include six chapters. In the first chapter, I explain how we should interpret a story based on the idea that an important driving force of the human love for stories originates from the human "demand for order" and suggest narrative is an important way for human beings to construct the orders of the world, so as to help us get out of chaos. Based on this, we explain what is *wulitou* narrative? Why we take *wulitou* as an abnormal way of narrative? Meanwhile, I introduce how popular *wulitou* narrative was in China during the last 20 years.

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[32] Marshall McLuhan, Understanding the media - The Extensions of Man, California 2013, P58

In the second chapter, I discuss how media may work on what and how we see, and how the way of our narrative may be influenced by what and how we see. Based on this, I suggest the popularity of *wulitou* narratives may be deduced by the rise of the internet and the popularization of personal computers in China.

In the third chapter, from the two fundamental dimensions of human's perception ---- space and time, I discuss the possible way of seeing behind *wulitou* style narrative.

In the fourth chapter, I put *wulitou* in the global postmodernism context, from the perspective of the human act of seeing, explaining the different acts of seeing separately in the premodernist environment, modern environment and postmodernist environment. Based on this, I introduce the special cultural context towards the end of 1990s in China, which was a cultural mix of the historic premodernism, the unfinished modernization and the new postmodernism, and subsequently explaining why it is "*wulitou*", rather than the other styles of postmodernist narratives, became popular in China? And why did *wulitou* become popular in China rather than in other developed countries?

In the fifth chapter I suggest in the special cultural context in China, that *wulitou* narratives played an important role to deconstruct the old/traditional social orders.

In the sixth chapter I explain the possible reasons about why *wulitou* began to decline in China, which may include the change of the cultural context, and the influence of the new development of media technology.

CHAPTER 1: *WULITOU* 无厘头: AN ABNORMAL STYLE OF NARRATIVE

1.1 Why ----- "We Humans Love Story"

Humans love stories. From gossip, folklore, myth, poetry..... to prose, novel, drama..... and then to film and television comedy, online video......for thousands of years, mankind has been enthusiastic about the story and never get tired of it. In fact, as Robert McKee says, human's life "has already been linked with story inextricably":

> "Imagine, in one globe day, the pages of prose turned, plays performed, films screened, the unending stream of television comedy and drama, twenty-four hour print and broadcast news, bedtime tales told to children, barroom bragging, back-fence Internet gossip, humankind's insatiable appetite for stories. Story is not only our most prolific art form but rivals all activities ----- work, play, eating, exercise ----- for our waking hours. We tell and take in stories as much as we sleep ----- and even then we dream." [33]

But why do we humans love stories? What does a story mean to us?

Of course, you can say it is because stories (for example the news) can provide us information we need in our real life, but if so, how can we explain our endless love for fiction? You might also say it is because stories can entertain us or make us relax etc. But just like eating food can make us feel happy or satisfied, while you can't thereby contribute it as the reason about why humans like eating food ----The real reason for it is that our body needs energy and food can provide energy, while making us feel happy or satisfied is only a way to encourage us to have enough food our body needs. Similarly, although a story can really entertain us, or make us relax, we can't thereby however

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[33] McKee, Robert (1997). Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting. New York. P11

contribute it as the reason why we humans love stories. Behind the phenomenon, there must exist a more fundamental reason, but what is it?

In his famous work "*The Savage Mind*", Claude Levi-Strauss wrote:

> "Scientists do tolerate uncertainty and frustration, because they must. The one thing that they do not and must not tolerate is disorder......The thought we call primitive is founded on this demand for order. This is equally true of all thought but it is through the properties common to all thought that we can most easily begin to understand forms of thought which seem very strange to us."[34]

Here Claude Levi-Strauss proposes a phrase: "*demand for order*". How should we interpret it? As Claude Levi-Strauss says, it is the foundation of "all thought". While, what is more, if we pay close attention to the children's behaviors, we could say the "*demand for order*" seems a natural instinct of human being. Or, in other words, it seems that human beings have a natural instinct to find and build order.

To illustrate this point, we might as well have a look of a funny online article written by Stephen Mcneil, the topic of which was : "*A dialogue with Sarah, aged 3: in which it is shown that if your dad is a chemistry professor, asking 'why' can be dangerous*"[35]. Here we quote a paragraph of it:

> SARAH: Daddy, were you in the shower?
>
> DAD: Yes, I was in the shower.
>
> SARAH: Why?
>
> DAD: I was dirty. The shower gets me clean.
>
> SARAH: Why?
>
> DAD: Why does the shower get me clean?

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[34] Levi-Strauss, Claude (1966). The Savage Mind, London. P10
[35] Mcneil, Stephen. "A dialogue with Sarah, aged 3: in which it is shown that if your dad is a chemistry professor, asking 'why' can be dangerous". From https://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/only_joking/259790-a-dialogue-with-sarah-aged-3-in-which-it-is

SARAH: Yes.

DAD: Because the water washes the dirt away when I use soap.

SARAH: Why?

DAD: Why do I use soap?

SARAH: Yes.

DAD: Because the soap grabs the dirt and lets the water wash it off.

SARAH: Why?

DAD: Why does the soap grab the dirt?

SARAH: Yes.

DAD: Because soap is a surfactant.

SARAH: Why?

DAD: Why is soap a surfactant?

SARAH: Yes.

......

To almost every parent who has (or once had) a child of around 3-5 years old, the scene shown in the article above must be familiar: children of this ages often ask all kinds of questions to their parents (adults), and the most used word by them is "why?" ---- "why is it raining?" "Why must I eat food?" "Why is the fish swimming in the water?" "why must I sleep?" "why do leaves turn yellow?".... There seems to be "*Hundred Thousand Whys*" in every child's brain.

But why do children like to ask "why"? Psychologists tell us that it means children begin to pay more attention to the surroundings of them rather than the basic need for their survival, and it can be regarded as an "exploration" of children to their surroundings and the "first step" of children towards to the world.

Besides the word "why", in fact, there are still other similar words which also be asked by children often, such as: "what?", "so what?", "and then?" ,"how" and so on.

The significant feature of what the children of this age ask normally is not a single question, but a series of questions, which means a question after a question. And if you do further observations, you will find that within the series of questions, there usually has close relations between the previous question and the following ones.

Here we take the paragraph of "*A dialogue with Sarah, aged 3: in which it is shown that if your dad is a chemistry professor, asking 'why' can be dangerous*", which we mentioned above, as an example to analyze:

	Dialogue between Sarah and her father	**Answer to the "why"s**
1	SARAH: Daddy, were you in the shower? DAD: Yes, I was in the shower. SARAH: Why? DAD: I was dirty. The shower gets me clean.	The shower gets me clean
2	SARAH: Why? DAD: Why does the shower get me clean? SARAH: Yes. DAD: Because the water washes the dirt away when I use soap.	The water washes the dirt away when I use soap.
3	SARAH: Why? DAD: Why do I use soap? SARAH: Yes. DAD: Because the soap grabs the dirt and lets the water wash it off.	The soap grabs the dirt and lets the water wash it off.
4	SARAH: Why? DAD: Why does the soap grab the dirt? SARAH: Yes. DAD: Because soap is a surfactant.	Soap is a surfactant

If we reverse the order of the answers, we can get a causality "story" with causal/logical orders, here we might as well name the story as "*A Shower To Get Daddy Clean*":

> (Daddy was in the shower), the soap (daddy use) is a surfactant, (therefore) the soap grabs the dirt and lets the water wash it off, (hence) the water with soup together washes the dirt away when Daddy use soap, (as a result) the shower gets Daddy clean.

But of course, children's questions are not always asked like this way. Sometimes, the questions asked by them seem have no obvious logical/causal sequence. On the website of *Zhihu* 知乎, the most popular Chinese social online platform to ask questions and share knowledge, a Chinese parent posted a dialog between he (or she) and his (or her) child, who is also 3-years old:

> "当我从冰箱里面拿出一块豆腐。什么来的？豆腐啊。什么豆腐啊？......豆腐
> 啊。谁做的啊？叔叔啊。哪个叔叔啊？....
>
> PS 孩子只有三岁哦！！......"

When I took a piece of Tofu[36] out of the refrigerator. (my child asked me:) What is it? (I answered:) Tofu. (my Child asked:) What (or what kind of) Tofu? (I answered:)......just a Tofu. (my child asked:) Who made it? (I answered:) An uncle. (my child asked:) Which uncle?.....

---

[36] A kind of common Chinese food, which is made from soybeans.

PS: my child is just 3 years old!!

Different from the questions asked by the 3-years old girl Sarah in our last example, the questions asked by the 3 years old Chinese child in this example, they are not asked with obvious logical or causal sequence, and the relations between them seem be random. But if we read it carefully , we will find that is not the fact.
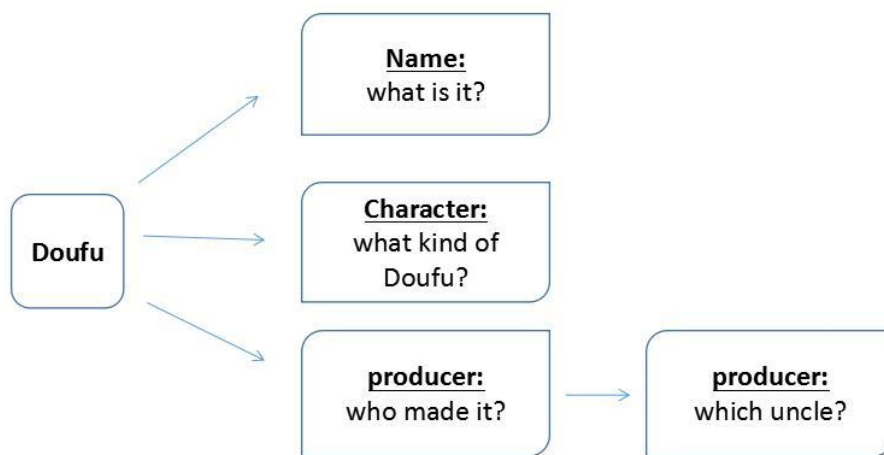
The 3 years old child has asked 4 questions, and the 4 questions has a common subject: *Tofu*. Around the subject *Tofu*, the questions concerned 3 characters of *Tofu*: name, material and producer, which means that although the questions are not asked with causal or logical sequence, they still have close relations, which in the end also forms a "story " about the "*Tofu*"---- this time, we give the story a name as "*A Piece of Tofu Made by an Uncle*":

> "An uncle made a pieces of food, he made it from soya beans, and the name
> of the food is Tofu."

Hence, no matter what the specific series of problem are, and how they are asked, the answers of the questions asked by a 3-5 years old child, can be mostly interconnected as a series of orders/relations between subjects matter around an issue or a topic, to form a story.

Therefore, instead of generally saying those questions asked by children represent an "exploration" of children to their surroundings, it's better to say that those questions of children, to say more concretely, represent a type of exploration to the orders (relations) between the different things around them.

Thus that is what I suggest: humans seem have a natural instinct to "find/build order". As for why humans have a natural instinct to "find/build order", the answer is obvious: human's consciousness refuses chaos or disorders, for chaos or disorders means unmanageability and danger.

And as we noticed, the natural instinct of humans to "find/build order" can usually let the "story" be constructed, story thus can be taken as a way for humans "to order chaos and gain insight into life"[37], in other words, the story is an universal way for us to explain the world, or a kind of expression of the interconnected orders/relations we built/find between things in the world.

The subjects of the two stories ("*A Shower to Get Daddy Clean*") and ("*A Piece of Tofu Made by an Uncle*") we gave as example above, are physical and objective. But from a human perspective, what can attract our interest and touch our heart more often, are the fictional stories, the subjects of which are abstract and subjective (such as, god, nation, love, moral, and so on).

Why do humans create fictional stories? From the perspective of humans as a whole, the orders established in the fictional stories make the formation of human society possible, which As Yuval Noah Harari says:

> "...fiction has enable us not merely to imagine things, but to do so collectively. We can weave common myths such as the biblical creation story, the Dreamtime myths of Aboriginal Australians, and the nationalist myths of modern states. Such myths give Sapiens the unprecedented ability to cooperate flexibly in large numbers...

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[37] McKee, Robert (1997). Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting. New York. P12

Any large-scale human cooperation – whether a modern state, a medieval church, and ancient city or an archaic tribe – is rooted in common myths that exist only in peoples collective imagination….

The real difference between us and chimpanzees is the mythical glue that binds together large numbers of individuals, families and groups. This glue has made us the masters of creation." [38]

That is, briefly, through fictional stories, mankind constructed the relations between its members, and created the orderly pattern, which made the large-scale human cooperation come true ---- It make "I" become "We".

From the perspective of individual, the orders established in the fictional story also play an important role ---- they help us to imitate and learn how to get along with others, and how to live in society. In the words of Robert McKee, "our appetite for story is a reflection of the profound human need to grasp the patterns of living, not merely as an intellectual exercise, but within a very personal, emotional experience."[39]

That is, our love for story may originate from our natural instinct to "find/build order". Or in other word, an important driving force of the humans love for stories may originate from the natural instinct of humans to "find/build orders".

And therefore, no matter that the subject of a story is "physical and objective" or "abstract and subjective", as the audience, we always expect to find some "laws" (orders) concerning how and why things happen within the world that the story creates ("no matter how realistic or bizarre the setting may be"), which as Robert McKee indicates:

"From its first glimpse of the first image, the audience inspects your fictional universe, sorting the possible from the impossible, the likely from the unlikely. Consciously and unconsciously, it wants to know your 'laws', to learn how and why things happen in your specific world. You create these possibilities and limitations through your personal choice of setting and the way you work within it. Having invented these structures, you

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[38] Harari, Yuval Noah (2014). Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind. UK. P19, P21, P30

[39] McKee, Robert (1997). Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting. New York. P12

are bound to a contract you must keep. For once the audience grasp the law of your reality, it feels violated if you break them and rejects your work as illogical and unconvincing. "[40]

It means to tell a story, the storyteller needs always be aware of the "laws" he or she established in the fictional world of the story, and be carefully not to break the "laws", otherwise, it may make the audience "feels violated".

While to establish the "laws" in a world of the story is firstly based on the premise of selecting a setting for the story, because "a story's setting sharply defines and confines its possibilities".[41] In other words, the setting of a story defines and confines the "laws and orders" for how and why things happen in a story.

Therefore, logically, once the "setting" of a story is determined, the events and scenes, and the dialogues, behaviors, even dressings of the roles in the story should conform to the "setting" in the world of the story, to keep the whole story logical and convincing ---- This is normally how human beings create and tell a story.

In this sense, it's really hard not to be surprised to notice that in the past 20 years or so, one of the most popular styles of narrative welcomed by the youth in China is actually none other than *wulitou* 无厘头 style of narrative!

1.2 "Wulitou": an Abnormal Style of Narrative

What is *wulitou* 无厘头? The term of *wulitou* 无厘头 is originally a local saying in Cantonese[42]. According to Mao Weimin 毛伟敏 and Wei Yu 魏雨's investigation[43], the meaning of *wulitou* 无厘头 might originally have two explanations: First, it might be interpreted as *wu laitou* 无来头---- in Chinese, *wu* 无 means "without", "no", and *laitou* 来头 refers to "cause /reason" or "background/context"; Second, the term "*litou*"

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[40] McKee, Robert (1997), Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting, New York. P70

[41] McKee, Robert (1997), Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting, New York. P69

[42] A variety of Chinese spoken in Guangdong and neighboring areas such as Hongkong and Macau.

[43] Mao Weimin 毛伟敏, Wei Yu 魏雨, "Wulitou You Laitou" 《无厘头有来头》，In "Yaowen Jiaozi"《咬文嚼字》, 2006 (7)

厘头 might also be interpreted as "zhunze" 准则, which means "norm" or "standards". Consequently, as a Cantonese local saying, *wulitou* 无厘头 may refer to: "without rhyme or no reason", "ambiguous background/context" or "without norm/ standards". And once a person's behavior or words have these features above, most possibly what this person expresses or does is "hard to comprehend" for others, and thus are taken as "nonsense". That is why *wulitou* is often translated in English as "nonsense".

In 1990s, with the screening of Zhou Xingchi 周星驰[44] (Stephen Chow) 's comedic films, *wulitou* developed from a Cantonese local saying into a widely accepted term to describe a type of humor or a style of narrative in Chinese speaking areas, and was included in "*Xinhua Xin Ciyu Cidian*" 《新华新词语词典》("*Xinhua Dictionary of Chinese Neologisms*") published in 2003, in which it was defined as "故意将一些毫无联系的事物现象等进行莫名其妙组合串联或歪曲，以达到搞笑或讽刺目的的方式。"[45] ("people deliberately combine or distort somethings or some phenomenon which have no connection by some unintelligible way to provoke laughter or reach the effect of satire.")

The definition of *wulitou* in "*Xinhua Xin Ciyu Cidian*" 《新华新词语词典》("*Xinhua Dictionary of Chinese Neologisms*") above tells us two important points about *wulitou*: First, *wulitou* is a style of humorous or comedic narrative, for it is intended to "provoke laughter or reach the effect of satire"; second, the way of *wulitou* to "provoke laughter or reach the effect of satire", is to "deliberately combine or distort somethings or some phenomenon which have no connection by some unintelligible way." ---- Here we borrow an example provided by Mao Weimin 毛伟敏 and Wei Yu 魏雨 in their article "*Wulitou You Laitou*"《无厘头有来头》 *"The Original Meaning of Wulitou"* to illustrate it:

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[44] Zhou Xingchi 周星驰, also named Stephen Chow, is a famous Hong Kong actor, comedian, film director and producer.

[45] Zhou Hongbo 周洪波 （2003），"Xinhua Xin Ciyu Cidian"《新华新词语词典》"Xinhua Dictionary of Chinese Neologisms"，Beijing 北京：Shangwu Yinshua Guan 商务印刷馆 The Commercial Press.

"例如…相声演员郭德纲有一次出场的一个包袱就是：床前明月光，疑是地上霜，举头望 Th 明月（啪！响木一敲），我叫郭德纲。" [46]

"For example... once at the opening of his show, the *Xiangsheng* 相声 ('Peking talk show') comedian Guo Degang joked: 'So bright a gleam on the foot of my bed---- Could there have been a frost already? Lifting my head to look, I found that it was moonlight' (Pa! the sound of Ringwood knocked), my name is Guo Degang".

Here the first three sentences recited by Guo Degang 郭德纲 are quoted from a famous Chinese ancient poem *Jing Ye Si* 静夜思 (*In the Quiet Night*), which was written by Li Bai 李白, a famous poet in Tang Dynasty of ancient China. The whole poem:

床前明月光，(So bright a gleam on the foot of my bed----)

疑是地上霜；(Could there have been a frost already?)

举头望明月，(Lifting my head to look, I found that it was moonlight.)

低头思故乡。(Sinking back again, I thought suddenly of home.)

(Translated by Tr. Witter Bynner)

That is, part of the content in the poem *Jing Ye Si* 静夜思 (*In the Quiet Night*) which is about the beautiful scene of moonlight seen and described by the poet Li Bai 李白, and the self-introduction of Guo Degang 郭德纲, the two totally different things, which have no connection, are "brutally" combined (by an unintelligible way) together to make a new "poem" (or a new narrative), and in this way laughter is provoked.

The example above shows us the following features appeared often in *wulitou* narrative: "parody" (in this example, the poem *Jing Ye Si* becomes the object of parody); "dislocation" (in this example, the link between the poem *Jing Ye Si* and the self-introduction of Guo Degang goes off the normal causal/logic route); "anachronism" (in this example, a contemporary person's self-introduction is "misplaced" in a scene happened in ancient China); "deconstruction" (in this example, the original structure and inner relations of the poem "*Jing Ye Si*" is therefore deconstructed); "fragment"

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[46] Mao Weimin 毛伟敏 and Wei Yu 魏雨, "Wulitou You Laitou" 《无厘头有来头》 "The Original Meaning of Wulitou", In "Yao Wen Jiao Zi" 《咬文嚼字》 (2006.07), P23-P24

and "collage". And herein I take "**dislocation**" and "**anachronism**" as the two key features to help us get a deep understanding of *wulitou* narrative:

Firstly, the "Cuowei" "错位" ("Dislocation") in *wulitou* narrative.

A professional concept to summarize *wulitou*'s way to provoke laughter should be "Cuowei"错位" ("Dislocation") proposed by Sun Shaozhen 孙绍振. In his article "*Lun Youmo Luoji De Erzhong Cuowei Lv*" "论 幽 默 逻 辑 的 二 重 错 位 律" (*On the Double Dislocation Law of the Logic of Humor*), Sun Shaozhen 孙绍振 defined "Cuowei"错位" ("Dislocation") as "一种逻辑被另一种逻辑篡了位" ("One logic is usurped by another logic"). According to his words, in the field of rational thinking in our daily life, usually we need obey the unified "law of identity" which means "概念一贯,不得悄悄偷换,要求思路一贯,不得偷偷转移。"[47]("The concept should keep its consistency, it is not allowed to be switched secretly; and the logical route should keep its continuity, it is not allowed to be shifted arbitrarily"); while "幽默的逻辑结构是一种二重的错位结构，它不遵守理性思维一元化的同一律…"("The logical structure of humor is a dislocated double structure. It does not obey the unified 'law of identity' in the field of rational thinking…"), instead, humor is normally produced when the "Cuowei" 错 位 " ("Dislocation") happened between different logical routes. To illustrate this point, he gave us an example:

> "在一个小学课堂里，数学老师当众宣布，今天讲减法。为了便于让小孩理解，她采取从感性开始的办法，她说，如果你哥哥有四个苹果，你拿走了三个，结果怎样？许多小学生都回答：'还有一个。'老师很满意，但是这时一个小孩高声叫了一声：'我被哥哥狠揍了一顿。于是大家开心的笑了起来。"[48]

("In a primary school class, the maths teacher announced to her students: 'Today, we will study 'subtraction' together'. In order to make it easier for the children to understand, she took the approach of sensibility and asked the students: 'if your brother had four apples, you took three, what would be the

[47] Sun, Shaozhen 孙绍振, "Lun Luoji Youmo De Erzhong Cuowei lv" "论逻辑幽默的二重错位律" ("*On the Double Dislocation Law of the Logic of Humor*"), In "Wenxue Pinlun" "文学评论"，1996（5），P78-P86
[48] Sun, Shaozhen 孙绍振, "Lun Luoji Youmo De Erzhong Cuowei lv" "论逻辑幽默的二重错位律" ("*On the Double Dislocation Law of the Logic of Humor*"), In "Wenxue Pinlun" "文学评论"，1996（5），P78-P86

result'? Many students replied: 'There is only one left.' The teacher was very satisfied with their answer, but at this time a child shouted: 'I would be beaten by my brother'. His answer made everyone happily laugh.")

In this example, there are two logical routes (or causal series): the first one happened on the logical/causal route of subtraction ---- "四个苹果减去三个苹果等于一个苹果" ("To take three apples out of four apples, will induce only one apple left") and the second one happened on the logical/causal route of daily interpersonal interaction ---- "哥哥有四个苹果，你没有征得他同意，擅自拿走了三个，当然要引起他的情绪膨胀，甚至野性爆发" （"The brother has four apples, to take three apples out of them without the brother's permission, will of course make him unhappy or even angry"). Since at the beginning, the logical route of subtraction is already set or confined by the maths class and the teacher's words ("Today we will study 'subtraction' together"), according to the unified 'law of identity' in the field of rational thinking, obviously, the following answer should be in accordance with or follow with the logical/causal route already been set at the beginning, that is "To take three apples out of four apples, will induce only one apple left". If we do like this, it is rational, but not humorous; to make it humorous we need do as the last child does ---- to choose another logical/causal route which does not follow with the former one set at the beginning, and make the logical/causal route shift from the former one to the other one (the other logical route usurps the former one) ---- when the two independent and different logical/causal routes met at the crossing point (situation), the humor is therefore produced.

Now go back to *wulitou*'s way to provoke laughter ---- "to deliberately combine or distort somethings or some phenomenon which have no connection by some unintelligible way to provoke laughter or reach the effect of satire". Obviously, here, "somethings or some phenomenon which have no connection" means the things or phenomenon are different and independently happened on different logical/casual routs, then once they are combined together, means there are some dislocation that happened between the different logical/causal routes, meanwhile the set of original logical/ causal route is broken, and thus laughter is provoked. In this sense, it is as I suggest that the

way of *wulitou* to provoke laughter can be summarize as "cuowei" "错位" ("dislocation").

For example, in the film "*Dahua Xiyou*"大话西游 ("*A Chinese Odyssey*") (Hongkong China1995), there is a dialogue between the protagonist Zhijunbao 至尊宝 and another character Master Puti 菩提:

A dialogue between Zhijunbao and Master Puti in"*Dahua Xiyou*" (Hongkong China1995)

至尊宝：我一定是太想念晶晶了。

Zhijunbao：I must miss Jingjing too much!

菩提老祖：是啊，你昏倒的时候，叫晶晶这个名字，叫了九十八次。

Master Puti: Yes, when you was in a coma, you called the name of "Jingjing" 98 times.

至尊宝：晶晶是我娘子。

Zhijunbao：Jingjing is my wife.

菩提老祖：还有一个名字叫紫霞的，你叫了七百八十四次。

Master Puti: But there is another name, "Zixia", you called the name 784 times.

至尊宝：（不可置信地）呃？…..

Zhijunbao: (unbelievably) Uh？….

菩提老祖：七百八十四次！这紫霞一定欠你很多钱。

Master Puti: 784 time! The girl named Zixia must owes you a lot of money.

In the beginning of the dialogue, the topic of it appears to be about emotion and love, however when we reach the final sentence, the logical route in the dialogue suddenly changed ---- "The girl named Zixia must own you a lot of money", when this sentence, which has no any logical connection with the sentences ahead of it, is spoken out from Master Puti's mouth, it means the logical route behind this sentence usurps the former one set at the beginning of the dialogue. That is, a dislocation between two logical routes happens, the logical route set at the beginning of the dialogue is therefore broken and usurped by another one, and thus a humorous effect is created.

Another example, in the film "*Tianxi Wushuang*" 天下无双 (China, 2002), when the two main characters Afeng 阿凤 and Along 阿龙 face-to-face appeared for the first time before the camera, their body gestures and facial expressions which look serious, make it easy to be expected there will be a serious Kungfu fight between the two of them.

It seems there will be a serious Kungfu fight between Afeng and Along. Captured from "*Tianxi Wushuang*" (China, 2002)

While a few seconds later, the whole style suddenly changes: a gust of wind throws papers on their faces. Which makes them look funny and comical.

A gust of wind throws papers on Afeng and Along's faces. Captured from "*Tianxi Wushuang*" (China, 2002)

And next, it happens that the so-called expected "serious Kungfu fight" is nothing more than a few somersaults done by Afeng.

Afeng turns somersaults on the ground. Captured from "*Tianxi Wushuang*" (China, 2002)

Obviously, in this example, the different logical routes behind the different actions/pictures ("serious facial expression" vs. "comedic facial looking" and "serious Kungfu gesture" vs. "comedic somersault") are collaged together in an unexpected way, and thus the "dislocation" is produced.

Similar examples are ubiquitous in *wulitou* narratives. Through the use of "dislocation", to make different styles of things, actions, pictures or phenomenon be "collaged" together , *wulitou* can always break the existing "logical route", and make an effect of "out of expectation". About this point, "锐影 Vanguard" (Ruiying Vanguard) has stated it: "大致说起来，此类影片着重于打破既有逻辑，人物在典型情景中的举动不符合常规，突破观众的观影时的预期…" [49] ("Roughly speaking, such films -- *wulitou* films, put emphasis on breaking the existing logical routes, and the behaviors

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[49] Ruiying 锐影 Vanguard, "*Wulitou Films are not Only Produced in Hong Kong*"《原来,无厘头电影并非香港才有》, http://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1596722229321574291&wfr=spider&for=pc

of the characters in typical situations are usually not in line with the conventions, thus the expectations of the audience are always broken.")

While to those who watch comedy often, the term "breaking existing logical routes" or "out of expectation" must not be unfamiliar. In fact, breaking the existing logical routes and the expectations of the audiences by the use of "dislocation", and therefore, making the story humorous or satirical, so as to provoke laughter and produce the effect of "comedy", is a comedic device used widely by comedies (for example, the comedy films produced in the silent-film era). About this point, we might as well take Charlie Chaplin's film "*The Great Dictator*" (U.S.A, 1940) as an example.

The "globe" played arbitrarily by the "great dictator".
Captured from "*The Great Dictator*" (U.S.A, 1940)

The microphone bends backwards its own "body".
Captured from "*The Great Dictator*" (U.S.A, 1940)

As a political satire comedy-drama film, to "provoke laughter and provide satire", in the film, there are many clips, which break the existing logical routes and the expectations of the audience, for example, the clip (as the picture on the left above shows) that a globe turned into a balloon which can be played arbitrarily by the "great dictator" (the logical route of a globe's physical character and function is usurped by the logical route of a balloon's physical character and function); and the clip (see the picture on the right above) that the microphone bends backwards its own "body" like a living creature as the great dictator growls at it (the logical route of a microphone's physical character and function is usurped by the logical route of a living creature's behavior) ---- the world in these clips is obviously distorted and looks "unreal" and

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"humorous or satirical", for the existing logical routes and the expectations of the audience are broken here.

In fact, in a comedic narrative, the dislocation may be found anywhere: it may happen between the logical route of the role's behavior and the logical route of his identity, for example, to let a man wear woman's clothes, and act like a women; it may happen between the logical route of the relations between people and the logical route of their interactions, which as it shows in the example Henri Bergon gave in his book "*Laughter: an Essay on the Meaning of the Comedic*" ---- "a prisoner at the bar lecturing the magistrate" [50]; it may happen between the logical route of the object's function and the logical route of how people use it, for example, to cut a cheese with an electric drill; it may happen between the logical route of the role's behavior or dressing and the logical route of the environment (context) he or she is in, for example, to let a butcher drink a cocktail in a gentlemanly way in front of his meat stall; and it may also happen between the different logical routes of dialogues, for example, to let different words with a different logical route be combined together⋯.

That is, as what Zhong Dafeng 钟大丰 states in his article "*Xiju Zuowei Leixing*" "喜剧作为类型" ("*Comedy as a Genre*") : "人物, 环境和对话, 情节、事件和视听语言各个方面都会出现彼此内部或互相之间的错位, 离开了这些错位喜剧几乎就无法存在。" [51]("The dislocation may appear in every aspect, which includes the roles, the environments and dialogues, plots, events, and audiovisual languages, without these dislocations, comedy can hardly be created.")

Since dislocation is not a way or technique used only by the *wulitou* narrative, but a widely used technique in comedic narrative, how to distinguish *wulitou* narrative from other comedic narratives? Or is (or are) there any difference(s) between *wulitou* narratives and other comedic narratives? I propose it is none other than the other key features of *wulitou* ----"**anachronism**" which makes *wulitou* narrative distinguished from other types of comedic narratives.

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[50] Bergson, Henri (2008), Laughter: an Essay on the Meaning of the Comedic. USA/UK: Arc Mano.
[51] Zhong Dafeng 钟大丰, "Xiju Zuowei Leixing" "喜剧作为类型"("*Comedy as a Genre*"), In "Dianying Chuangzuo", "电影创作" (1994.9), P60-P62

Secondly, the "anachronism" in *wulitou* narrative.

Everything happens in time and space, so does story. Thus, the series of images or scenes have the chance to be chosen and put in a narrative ---- even the shifting and dislocation of logical routes may happen often between them to provoke laughter, which as we see often in comedic narratives ---- they are normally confined by the "space-time" the story happened in (here we call it the "space-time setting" of a story), in other words, the chosen series of images or scenes normally would not be beyond the confines of the space-time setting of a story, so that the story can keep its continuity.

For example, in Charlie Chaplin's comedic film "*The Great Dictator*"(U.S.A, 1940) , as we noticed, no matter how "illogical" or "ridiculous" some of the scenes or the events in this film may look like, while from the perspective of "space-time setting" to view, all the scenes (which include the dialogues, the behaviors, the dressings of the roles….) in the film are always confined by the "space-time setting" of the story, and every glance of this scenes always reminds us of the setting about when and where the story happened (the space-time setting of the story): the first half of 19th century (from World War I to World War II), in Europe (mainly in Germany).

The same is true with most of the other comedies. That is, basically, no matter how "illogical" or "ridiculous" the scenes or events in a comedy may look like, the setting of the story is normally kept consistent, and all the things appeared in the story are defined and confined by the setting of story, which as Robert McKee puts it, "Although your setting is fiction, not everything that comes to mind may be allowed to happen in it. Within any world, no matter how imaginary, only certain events are possible or probable".[52]

While different from other normal comedy in the general sense, or more broadly, other types of narratives, the *wulitou* narrative, on the contrary, seems be keen on creating an effect of **anachronism** by breaking the confinement of its space-time setting. That is, for anything, it is of no concern whether it conforms to the "space-time setting" of a

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[52] McKee, Robert (1997). Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting. New York, P69

story or not, it still has the possibility to happen in the *wulitou* style narrative. As a result, the space-time setting in the *wulitou* story seems ambiguous.

For example, in the film "*Tianxi Wushuang*" 天下无双 (China, 2002), the space-time settings of which is in the ancient China of Ming Dynasty, there is a scene when Along 阿龙 led a group of his brothers to fight with another group of people, an officer dressed in modern traffic police uniforms suddenly appeared before them (see the picture below).

An officer dressed in modern traffic police uniforms suddenly appeared. Captured from "*Tianxi Wushuang*" 天下无双 (China, 2002)

What the office's appearance has broken here is not only the confines of the logical route in the film, but more importantly, the confines of the space-time of setting of the film, and an effect of **"anachronism"** is therefore created.

In this sense, the way of *wulitou* to provoke laughter is still usually different from "cuowei" "错位"("dislocation"), or it is not quite the same as "cuowei" "错位"("dislocation"), for what the concept of "cuowei" "错位" ("dislocation") emphasizes is the breaking of the confines of the logical route which is already set; while the way of *wulitou* to provoke laughter will break usually not only the confines

of the logical route, but also in most cases the confines of the space-time of setting of a story.

To have a further understanding of this point, we analyze a popular Chinese web series "*Wanwan Mei Xiangdao*"《万万没想到》("*Unexpectedness*") (2013-2016) as an example to illustrate it.

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In an exaggerated and comedic way, "*Wanwan Mei Xiangdao*"《万万没想到》("*Unexpectedness*") (2013-2016), a Chinese popular web series, describes the protagonist *Wang Dachui* 王大锤's various unexpected experiences. From the current hot topics to the classical stories, it's all-encompassing plots, together with its funny perspectives and humorous dialogues, attract numerous fans in China . From the year of 2013 (the time it began to be released online) to 2015 (the time that the first two seasons of it was over), the play times of it online has already totaled "over 2 billion".[53] And in 2013, it was selected by the Chinese internet audiences as "2013 网络第一神剧" ("The Top 1 Chinese Web Drama in 2013")[54]; in 2014, it got the accolade as "2014 最受大学生瞩目网络剧" ("The Most Attractive Web Series in 2014") at the "2014 中国大学生电视节" ("China Student Television Festival 2014")[55].

One of the most important features of its narration is the "anachronism": to deliberately make various things or phenomenon from different space-time of settings which have no connection be combined in an illogical way.

Here we analyze episode 1 of its second season as our text analysis object. In this episode, which lasts only 7 minutes, the protagonist *Wang Dachu* 王大锤's identity becomes the Lord Buddha's left hand (picture below).

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[53] Xun Chao 荀超, " 'Unexpectedness' Huigui, Wang Dacui Zoushang Resheng Dianfeng"《<万万没想到>回归，王大锤走上人生巅峰》, 04, Nov. 2015, 《华西都市报》(West China City Daily)

[54] Luo Anji 洛安吉, " 'Wanwan Mei Xiangdao' Pin Shenme Chengwei 2013 Wangluo Diyi Shenju?"《<万万没想到>凭什么成为 2013 网络第一神剧？》From http://news.mtime.com/2013/11/28/1521112.html

[55] "Daxuesheng Dianshijie Bimu, Wanwan Zui Shou Daxuesheng Zhumu"《大学生电视节闭幕 <万万>"最受大学生瞩目"》, 27, Oct. 2014, From http://hebei.ifeng.com/detail_2014_10/27/3066324_0.shtml

我并不是五指山

The protagonist Wang Dachu -- the Lord Buddha's left hand. Captured from "*Wanwan Mei Xiangdao*" .

The story summary of it is:

> Lord Buddha turned his left hand (the protagonist Wang Dachui) into a five-finger mountain to trapped Monkey king under it, and told Wang Dachui that he can return back as Lord Buddha's left hand, only if there is someone is willing to take Monkey king to the Western Heaven to fetch the Buddhist scripture, so that the Monkey King can get rid of his wicked nature. In order to return back as Lord Buddha's left hand , Wang Dachui tries all his best to persuade Tang Monk to take Monkey King together with him to go to the Western Heaven to fetch the Buddhist scripture ... But in the end, he never ever thought that although he succeeds in persuading Tang Monk taking Monkey King to go to the Western Heaven, he himself still isn't returned back as Lord Buddha's left hand as his wish, instead, he is turned into the golden hoop on Monkey King's head...

The whole story of this episode includes 9 plots (scenes):

C. The opening credits and advertisements

1. Monkey King assails the five-finger mountain (Wang Dachui) angrily how long in hell he will be trapped under the mountain.

2. (flashback) The Jade Emperor asks the Lord Buddha to help him suppress Monkey King.

3. (flashback) The Monkey king slaps the faces of the commanders who come from heaven.

4. (flashback) Lord Buddha turns his left hand (Wang Dachui) into a five-finger mountain, and traps Monkey king under the mountain.

5. 500 years later, the Monkey king is still being pressed under the mountain.

6. Lord Buddha tells Wang Dachui to find someone to take Monkey King to the Western Heaven to fetch the Buddhist scripture.

7. Wang Dachui tries all his best to persuade Tang Monk to take Monkey King with him to go to the Western Heaven to fetch the Buddhist scripture.

8. Tang Monk agrees to take Monkey King with him to go to the Western Heaven to fetch the Buddhist scripture, and releases Monkey King out from the five-finger mountain

9. Wang Dachui is turned into the golden hoop on Monkey King's head by Lord Buddha.

E. The ending credits.

From the main plots and characters of this episode, we recognize easily that it is a story based on "*Xi You Ji*" 《西游记》(*Pilgrimage to the West*), one of the Four Great Classical Works of Chinese literature, and the fictional settings of it approximately are in the ancient China of Tang Dynasty and the mythical world.

Besides "the ancient China in Tang Dynasty and the mythical world", all the other "settings", such as "America and Europe", or "modern days", and "in the future", they all should be classified as the ones that go beyond the fictional settings of the story.

When you watch "*Wanwan Mei Xiangdao*"《万万没想到》(*Unexpectedness*), it is easy to have a feeling that the script writer of it seems to be fond of picking and combining words (and sentences) at random, while ignoring the constraints of the fictional settings and the normal rules of logic.

The most often seen phenomenon in "*Wanwan Mei Xiangdao*"《万万没想到》（*Unexpectedness*) is that all different style words: slang and written language, old sayings and modern sayings, Chinese languages and foreign languages...no matter what they are, no matter where they come from, and no matter whether they conform to the space-time of the setting or not, all of them seem to have the possibility to be combined with any of others freely and unscrupulously. Here, the way the sentences are formed, making it more like a language game, rather than a serious narrative.

Take the episode (the episode 1 of its second season) we mentioned above as an example: in the scene 6 of it, after Lord Buddha told Wang Dachui the way to get rid of Monkey King's wicked nature, there is a dialogue between Wang Dachui and Lord Buddha:

王大锤："那你干嘛不早说。"

Wang Dachui: "why did not you tell me about it earlier?"

如来："我这是为了磨练你，让你自己学会顿悟啊。加油，<u>么么哒</u>。"

Lord Buddha: "That is because I want you go through trials and tribulations , so that you will learn to get sudden comprehension of the truth of Buddhism. Come on, <u>Mo mo da.</u>"

The last word said by Lord Buddha: "么么哒" ("Mo mo da"), is a popular online slang in China. It is homophonic to "mu a", which is regarded as an expression of love when the parents kiss their baby, and later is developed into an expression of "kiss", "love" or "warm greetings".

From the view of logic, to let a current popular online slang "Mo mo da" come from Lord Buddha's mouth, really sounds unreasonable and illogical. But it creates and conveys humor and satire in making a comic effect.

Another similar example: in scene 8, in order to persuade Tang monk into taking Monkey King with him to go to the Western Heaven, Wang Dachu tells Tang monk:

"你就不想<u>提升自己在行业里的竞争力</u>吗？你没有因为<u>学历低</u>而失去机会吗？去天竺镀金回来，对<u>评职称</u>什么的，都是很有帮助的。"

("Don't you want to <u>enhance your competitiveness in your profession</u>? Don't you have the experience to lost opportunities because of <u>low academic qualifications</u>? Going to Tianzhu (the Western Heaven) for improvement will be very helpful for you to <u>upgrade your professional titles,</u> and improve your career.")

In this dialogue, Wang Dachui uses many modern words, such as "enhance your competitiveness in your profession","low academic qualifications", "upgrade your professional titles". It is also seems illogical and weird to use these modern words here. Anyway, as we noticed that this is a story based on an ancient literature, the setting of which is in ancient myth world.

It mixed the different time and space by putting these modern words into a story with ancient setting and breaking the space-time limit of the setting. This does not comply with the general convention of narrative, but seems to be an important characteristic of this way of narration of "*Wanwan Mei Xiangdao*"《万万没想到》("*Unexpectedness*"). Or, in other words, it is nothing else, but the mixed space-time ("**anachronism**") making it's narration seem illogical and weird, but meanwhile, creating the effect of humor and satire.

Now we will do further analysis on this point. In scene 7 of this episode, there is a passage of dialogue among Wang Dachui, Tang monk and Monkey King:

王大锤："喂，这位高僧。"

Wang Dachui: "Hey, dear monk."

唐僧："哦，咳咳咳，<u>预防火灾，人人有责</u>，阿弥陀佛。"

Tang monk (throws the cigarette he is smoking on the ground, and cough): "Oh, <u>everyone is responsible to prevent fire</u>, Amitabha."

王大锤（独白）："<u>安全意识好高</u>，不愧是得道高僧。不管怎样，一定要把他骗去西天取经。"

Wang Dachui (monologue): "how high his <u>security awareness</u> is, he really deserves of the name of respectable monk. Anyway, I must persuade him to go to the West Heaven to fetch the Buddhist scripture."

王大锤：“请问高僧，有没有兴趣带这只妖猴去西天取经啊？”

Wang Dachui: "Excuse me, would you like to take the monkey to the Western Heaven to fetch the Buddhist scripture, ah?"

唐僧："啊... 并没有兴趣，他太丑了。"

Tang monk: "Ah ... no interest, he is too ugly."

孙悟空："说我丑？信不信我砍死你啊？"

Monkey King: "You say I'm ugly? Would you believe it that I will <u>hack you to death</u>?"

唐僧："你看他头发，都多久没有洗了，都分叉了，我可是一个<u>有洁癖</u>爱干净的<u>美少男</u>呢。"

Tang monk: "Look at his hair, how long has it been since them was washed last time? The ends of his hair are already bifurcated, you should know that I am a <u>neat freak</u>, and a handsome boy liking cleanliness."

孙悟空："放手！信不信我<u>砍死你</u>啊！"

Monkey King: "Believe it or not, I will <u>hack you to death</u>!"

唐僧："他老是说砍死你，是不是<u>没有什么文化</u>啊？"

Tang monk: "He always says 'hack you to death', is he <u>without culture</u> ?"

王大锤："他很厉害的，你有兴趣带他去西天取经吗？"

Wang Dachui: "He is very strong, are you interested to take him to the Western Heaven to fetch the Buddhist scripture?"

唐僧："呃... 没有，再见！"

Tang monk: "Uh ... no, bye!"

Note: the words with underline means they come from "the space-time beyond story".

This is the passage of dialogue from the first time that Wang Dachui tries to persuade Tang Monk to take Monkey King with him to the Western Heaven to fetch the Buddhist scripture. And the time of the dialogue lasts no more than 35 seconds in this episode. But even only in this short time of 35 seconds, there are appear 6 times these kind of

words which do not belong to "the space-time of the story" , but belong to "the space-time beyond story".

For example, "预防火灾，人人有责" ("everyone is responsible to prevent fire") , the words is a typical modern saying, it belongs to "the space-time beyond story", more specifically speaking, it belongs to the modern time and modern world.

Below is a list of the words that come from the space-time that is "beyond" the setting of the story in the passage of dialogue. We will see the resources of them that from where they originate, and the specific space-time "beyond" the setting of the story that each word belongs to:

1，"预防火灾，人人有责" （ "everyone is responsible to prevent fire"）

Resources it come from: Modern slogan to prevent against fire

The specific " space-time beyond story" it belongs to: Modern time, Modern world

2，"安全意识" （ "security awareness")

Resources it come from: Modern popular word

The specific " space-time beyond story" it belongs to: Modern time, Modern world

3，"有洁癖" (" neat freak")

Resources it come from: Modern popular word

The specific " space-time beyond story" it belongs to: Modern time, Modern world

A

4， "美少男" (" handsome boy")

Resources it come from: Modern popular word

The specific " space-time beyond story" it belongs to: Modern time, Modern world

5, "砍死你" (" hack you to death")

Resources it come from: Hong Kong popular gangster movies in1990's

The specific " space-time beyond story" it belongs to: From 1990 till now, the fiction world of gangster movie

B

6,"没(有什么)文化" ("without culture")

Resources it come from: popular internet word in China

The specific " space-time beyond story" it belongs to: Current internet world in China

C

There appeared 6 words which come from 3 different space-time that "beyond" the setting of the story. Among these 6 words, there are 4 words belong to one and the same space-time that "beyond" the setting of the story: space-time A (modern time, modern world); and one word belongs to the space-time B (in the 1990s, the fiction world of gangster movie); one word belongs to the space-time C (current internet world in China).

Therefore, together with the space-time "of" the setting in this episode, there are totally 4 space-time appeared in the process of this 35 seconds' story. If we take the space-time "of" the setting as the main trunk of tree, then the other three space-time that "beyond" the setting could be looked as the branches of the main trunk.
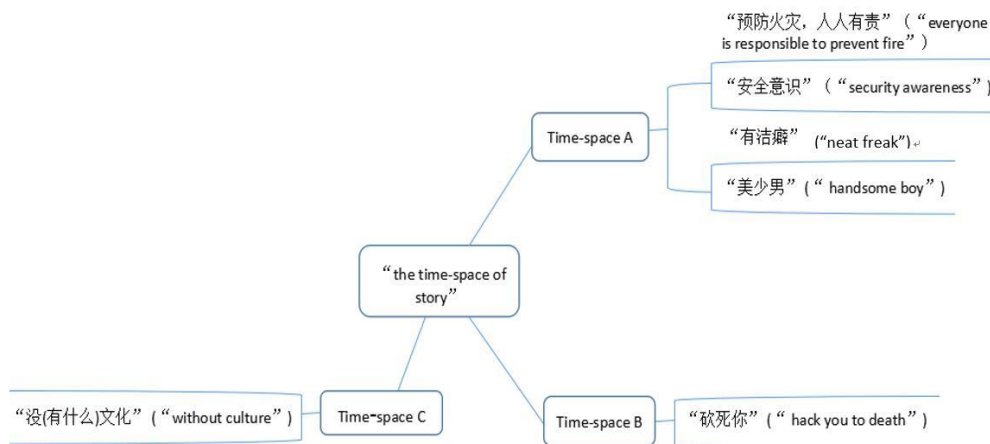
Note: the space-time A: modern time, modern world

the space-time B: in the 1990s, the fiction world of gangster movie

space-time C: current internet world in China

So, we can see that although as we mentioned **anachronism** is a prominent feature of *wulitou* style narrative, it doesn't mean that the space-time "beyond" the setting of the story has equal position with the space-time "of" the setting in the story. Normally the space-time "of" story is always found at the leading position, while the remaining space-time "beyond" the setting of the story need to revolve around and serve the space-time "of" the setting.

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The example we gave above about the "anachronism" in "*Wanwan Mei Xiangdao*" 《万万没想到》 (*Unexpectedness*) is mainly manifested by connecting spoken languages in several different space-time "beyond" the setting of story to the space-time "of" story. But this is definitely not the only way for the "anachronism" to manifest itself in *wulitou* narratives. To connect visual symbols/articles of the "space-time beyond the setting" to the "space-time of story" is also a common way for *wulitou* narrative to create the effect of anachronism.

Tang monk holds in his left hand a cigarette. Captured from *Wanwan Mei Xiangdao* (the episode 1 of its second season) (2014)

Xiangdao"《万万没想到》("*Unexpectedness*") which we have analyzed above. In this picture, what the Tang monk holds in his left hand is a cigarette, a visual symbol which belongs to the modern world (a "space-time beyond the setting") .

In the first episode of "*Taizifei Shengzhi Ji*"《太子妃升职记》("*Go go my princess*") (2015), one of the most popular web series in China from year 2015 to year 2016, there is a scene when the leading role waked up from a coma, but found that he was in a totally strange environment (a palace in ancient times). And when he was confused about what happened, an imperial doctor came in. We can clearly see at this time that on the imperial doctor's hat, there was a logo of Chanel (a modern fashion brand), a logo obviously and logically should not appear on an imperial doctor's hat in ancient time.

A logo of Chanel appeared on the imperial doctor's hat. Captured from *Taizifei Shengzhi Ji* (2015)

Similar examples can also be found in many other Chinese *wulitou* narratives in recent years. More examples, like: the modern IKEA style furniture sold on the street, and a transformer made of wood in the hit movie "*Shi Quan Jiu Mei*"《十全九美》(*Almost Perfect*) in 2008, the setting of which is in the Ming dynasty of ancient China.

The modern IKEA style furniture sold on the street. Captured from *Shi Quan Jiu Mei* (2008)

A transformer made of wood. Captured from *Shi Quan Jiu Mei* (2008)

The most popular Chinese sitcom in 2006, "*Wulin Waizhuan*"《武林外传》 (*My Own Swordsman*) , whose setting obviously is also in the ancient China, provides us another example related to this type: the picture of the desktop of Window system appears in the opening title sequence of every episode of it.

The opening title sequence of *Wunlin Waizhuan* (2006)

Music and sound effects are another element which can often be used as a means to connect the "space-time beyond story" to the "space-time of story" .

In the first episode of "*Ming Zhentan Di Renjie*"《名侦探狄仁杰》（*Direnjie - The Famous Detectiv*) (2015), a Chinese web series, the music of a famous Japanese cartoon "*Ming Zhentan Ke Nan*"《名侦探柯南》(*Detective Conan*) (1996) plays an important role to connect a cartoon world ("Japan of modern time") to the "space-time of story" of this internet web series ("Tang dynasty in China").

And when we watch the comedy sketch "*Wo De Chunian Shi Dalao*"《我的初恋是大佬》(*My first lover is a big brother*) (2017) which was performed on the stage of "*Huanle Xiju Ren*"《欢乐喜剧人》(*Top Funny Comedian*), a comedy sketch TV show produced by Shanghai Dongfang satellite TV station 上海东方卫视, we can't ignore the music played repeatedly in it, which is excerpted from the theme song of a popular Chinese TV series "*Huanzhu Gege*"《还珠格格》(*Princess Pearl*) (1998) in the end of last century (the 20ᵗʰ century) ---- We classify it as a *wulitou* style narrative, and take it as an example here, because the setting of the story "*Wo De Chunian Shi Dalao*"《我的初恋是大佬》(*My first lover is a big brother*) is around the 1930's-1950' s, while the TV series "*Huanzhu Gege*"《还珠格格》(*Princess Pearl*) was produced in the 1990s. Apparently it is illogical to let music produced in the1990s appear in a story whose setting is around the1930s-1950s. But it can be a way for *wulitou* narrative to create the effect of anachronism.

Besides spoken languages, visual symbols, music and sound effects, the one that break the space-time confinement of the setting of a story, and therefore to create an effect of "anachronism", could also be a "copied scene" which suddenly "time-travelled" from the space-time of some other narratives to the space-time of the *wulitou* narrative.

The chasing with "windmill" foot. Captured from *Kung Fu Hustle* (2004) by Stephen Zhou

As the picture above captured from the film "*Gongfu*"《功夫》(*Kung Fu Hustle*) (2004) by 周星驰 (Stephen Zhou) shows, a scene which is often appeared in Cartoon world ---- chasing with "windmill" foot, was mixed into the plot when the landlady is chasing after the protagonist Ashing 阿星.

A scene copied from "*saving Private Ryan*" (U.S.A, 1998). Captured from *Shaolin Soccer* (2001) by Stephen

And the picture above captured from another film "*Shaolin Zuqiu*" 《少林足球》 *Shaolin Soccer* (2001) directed by 周星驰 (Stephen Zhou) shows us a scene which is obviously copied from *saving Private Ryan* (U.S.A,1998) and here is mixed into the plot when the leading role is fighting against the players of an opponent team on the soccer field.

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Of course, most of the times, any of these ways to create the effect of "anachronism" does not exist alone in *wulitou* narratives, normally, in a same *wulitou* narrative, we can find two or more kinds of these ways.

<p align="center">*********</p>

Wulitou narrative is easy to be confused with "intertextuality" and "fragmented comedy". So, before we continue with further discussion, it is necessary here to make it clear the difference between "*wulitou*" and the other two ones:

"*Wulitou*" and "Intertextuality"

"Intertextuality", also as a way of narration, normally refers to the way of narration to borrow some content from another text.

Some "intertextuality" can be also looked as a way of "*wulitou*" narration, for example, to play the music of a famous Japanese cartoon "*Ming Zhentan Ke Nan*"《名侦探柯南》(*Detective Conan*) (1996) in "*Ming Zhentan Di Renjie*"《名侦探狄仁杰》(*Direnjie - The Famous Detective*) (2015) (above mentioned), not only a kind of "intertextuality", but also a kind of "*wulitou*" narration, for obviously the "intertextuality" here make the space-time confinement of the setting in the story broken.

But not all "intertextuality" can be looked as the way of "*wulitou*" narration. For example, in the hit Chinese film "*Xialuote Fannao*"《夏洛特烦恼》(*Goodbye Mr. Loser*) (2015), there appeared many popular Chinese songs of the 1990s. To play these songs in the film can be looked as a narrative of "intertextuality", but it can't be looked as "*wulitou*" narrative, as the "space-time of story" of this film is from the 1990s to the 2010s in China, which means these songs that appeared in the film all conform to the setting of the film's "space-time of story", and can be integrated into the story logically, therefore, they belong to the same "space-time"("space-time of story" of this film).

Hence, "intertextuality" can be a way for "*wulitou*" narrative to make the "space-time" get mixed, but not all of the "intertextuality" are the manifestation of "*wulitou*"

narrative. What the "intertextuality" emphasized is the relation between different texts, while what the "*wulitou*" narrative emphasized is the relation between different "times" and "spaces".

Two characters or symbols separately came from two different texts can belong to a same "space-time". Take the scene we have mentioned above in the film "*Xialuote Fannao*"《夏洛特烦恼》(*Goodbye Mr. Loser*) (2015) ---- "a popular song of the 1990s is sung by a young man in a film whose setting is in the1990s to mid-2010s as an example: "a popular song of the 1990s" (a symbol) and a "young man" (a character) who lives in in the1990s to mid-2010s, they separately came from two different "text", but in the movie, they both belong to a same "space-time".

And two characters or symbols separately belong to two different "space-time", do not necessarily came from two different "text". In the example we gave above about the web series "*Wan wan Mei Xiangdao*"《万万没想到》("*Unexpectedness*") (2014) ---- "the Monk Tang with a cigarette": "Monk Tang"(a character) and "a cigarette"(a symbol), they separately belong to two different "space-time", but the cigarette came from real world, not a fiction "text". That is, they separately came from a text world and a real world, rather than two different " texts".

"*Wulitou*"and "Fragmented Comedy"

"*Wulitou*" narrative is also easy to be confused with "fragmented comedy", which is also a new form of narrative and became popular in the recent years.

The popular "fragmented comedies" in recent years in China are: "*Diaosi Nanshi*"《屌丝男士》 ("*Diors Man*") (China/2012-2015), "*Jipin Nüshi*"《极品女士》("*Wonder lady*") (China/2012-2015), "*Huobao Dangan*"《活宝档案》("*Funny Foe*") (China/2014-2016), and "*Knaller Frauen*" (Germany/2011-2015). Among them, "*Cray lady*" (2012-2015) is regarded as the Chinese version of "*Knaller Frauen*" (Germany/2011-2015), for the copyright of "*Jipin Nüshi*"《极品女士》("*Wonder lady*") (China/2012-2015) is introduced from the latter.

As a comedy, "fragmented comedy" is characterized by its grotesque and exaggerated ways of narrative. Similarly, "*wulitou*" stories often borrow the funny and exaggerated method to make its audience laugh.

Two men both wear a super big butterfly knot on their head with silk scarf. Captured from "*Jiupin Zhima Guan*" (1994, Hongkong China)

Zhima Guan" "九品芝麻官 (*Hail the Judge*) (1994, Hongkong China) , the two men in the picture both wear a super big butterfly knot on their head with silk scarf, which makes the scene look funny and humorous.

Another feature of "fragmented comedy" is, each episode consists of a few micro stories, between which there is no obviously relations of consistency or causality, which makes it also be similar with "*wulitou*" style narrative.

Because of the two main features of "fragmented comedy", it does really easy to be confused with the "*wulitou*" style narrative.

But we can still find the difference between the two: in "*wulitou*" narrative, "the inconsistency" or "non-causality" mainly refers to the description of the relations between the things happening in a same story. That is, what happen in the fictional world of "*wulitou*" narrative, often don't comply with the "laws" which are defined by the setting in the fictional world.

While in "fragmented comedy", "the inconsistency" or "non-causality" mainly refers to the relations between the micro stories in a same episode, while within the fictional world of the micro story of "fragmented comedy", the "laws" may still work. That is, how and why things happen in the fictional world of each micro story, still generally complying with the laws which are defined and confined by the setting in the fictional world.

But it does not mean that there is no possible to find "*wulitou*" style scenes in a "fragmented comedy". In fact, it is not uncommon to find "*wulitou*" style scenes appeared in a "fragmented comedy".

For example, in episode 4 of the fourth season of "*Diaosi Nanshi*" 《屌丝男士》 ("*Diors Man*") (2012-2015), there appeared a scene in which there are two men, whose identities are ancient Chinese swordsmen, while (as the picture below shows) the award cup, the certificate of award and the medal before them all come from modern world.

Two swordsmen are talking about the certificate of award and the medal they got. Captured from "*Diaosi Nanshi*"
(the episode 4 of its fourth season) (2015)

In *Wonder Lady* (China/2012-2015), there is a scene of the first micro comedy, in which the Calabash Brother, Superman, Spiderman, Ultraman …. those famous cartoon

characters, all appear together with a doctor and a bodyguard, just to protect the safety of the "wonder lady" on a skateboard.

Different famous cartoon characters all appear together. Captured from "*Jipin Nüshi*" (in episode 5 of its third season) (China/2014)

It shows, "fragmented comedy" can also borrow the way of "*wulitou*" narration to create its story, but it does not mean that "fragmented comedy" is equal to a "*wulitou*" narrative, for when we say "*wulitou*", it mainly refers to a kind of narration style in a story; while "fragmented comedy" mainly refers to a kind of way that enables different micro stories to be edited together in a same episode.

In this sense, rather than to say that "fragmented comedy" is a style of narration, we'd better to say that "fragmented comedy" is a kind of genre of story, which characterized by the "gathering" of micro comedies in the same episode through the collaged ways of editing ---- That is where it is different from "*wulitou*" narrative.

1.3   The Popularity of "*Wulitou*" as a Style of Narrative

Breaking the space-time confinement of the setting of a story, and making different space-time be collaged with illogical and an unreasonable way, and therefore creating an effect of **"anachronism"**, it is one of the main features of "*wulitou*" style narrative. While what we should note is that it's definitely not only in the last 20 years that the use of **"anachronism"** appeared in the narratives in China. In fact, in one of 鲁迅 (Luxun)'s book: "*Gushi Xinbian*"《故事新编》(which was first published in 1936), we can already find it.

For example, in Luxun 鲁迅's "*Gushi Xinbian*"《故事新编》, there is a story which was adapted from a Chinese ancient myths "*Dayu Zhishui*"《大禹治水》. The title of this story is *"Li shui"*《理水》, and the setting of it obviously is in the ancient China some 4000 ago. But when we read it, we can easily find in it many modern words like "*Youzhi Yuan*"" 幼稚园 " (Kindergarten), "*Daxue*"" 大学 " (University), "O.K", "*Yichuan*"" 遗传 " (Inherit) ---- This is exactly what we call **"anachronism"** in a narrative.

Can we therefore suggest that "*Gushi Xinbian*"《故事新编》is the first Chinese literature work that uses the "anachronism" device to tell a story? It doesn't seem so. In his book "*Zhongguo Xushi Xue*" "中国叙事学" ("*Chinese Narrative*"), professor Yangyi 杨义 points out that at least as early as in the middle of Ming Dynasty (around 450 years ago), the deliberate use of "anachronism" already appeared in Chinese narratives.

However, I have no intention here to discuss when was exactly the first time "anachronism" appears in Chinese narratives. What we can make ascertain is that obviously "anachronism", as a narrative device, has already existed in Chinese narratives for a significant duration.

If we take it as a narrative norm that what and how the data are arranged in a narrative should be defined and confined by the time-space setting of the story, then the use of anachronism, which deliberately break the time-space confinement in a narrative, can thus be interpreted as a struggle against norms/rules and powers. In this sense, it should not be surprise for us to notice the deliberately use of "anachronism" in narratives ----

especially during the periods when the society went through intense transforms and people were eager to deconstruct the old orders and rules.

While, anyhow, what we should note is that, if we take narrative as an interpretation of the world, "anachronism" obviously does not comply with the perceptual ways in which we experience the world, therefore, no matter how long "anachronism" already existed in narratives, it seemed that there was little possibility for "anachronism" to become popular in narratives. And this fact was evident: for a long time, in Chinese narratives, the "anachronism" always existed in narratives with a marginal status.

But this time, what seems illogical and unreasonable is that it is not others, but "*wulitou*" style narrative, with "anachronism" as one of its prominent feature, that in the last 20 years successfully becomes in China one of the most popular style of narrative ---- In the 1990s, "*wulitou*", as an abnormal style of narrative, firstly sprang up in Hong Kong China. And then, at the end of 1990s, it began to become widely accepted in the Chinese mainland. The suddenly popularity of the movie "*Dahua Xiyou*"《大话西游》("*A Chinese Odyssey* ") (1994) in China, is generally regarded as the acknowledged beginning of the popularity of *wuliou* narrative.

Starting from the sudden popularity of "*Dahua Xiyou*"《大话西游》("*A Chinese Odyssey*") at the end of 1990s, then "*Shaolin Zuqiu*"《少林足球》("*Shaolin Soccer*") (2001), "*Tianxia Wushuang*"《天下无双》 (2002), "*Gongfu*"《功夫》("*Kung Fu Hustle*")(2004), ("*Yige Mantou Yinfa De Xuean*")《一个馒头引发的血案》("*A murder case caused by Mantou*") (2005), "*Chunyun Diguo*"《春运帝国》("*Chunyun Empire*") (2006), "*Wulin Waizhuan*"《武林外传》("*My Own Swordsman*") (2006), "*Shiquan Jiumei*"《十全九美》("*Almost Perfect*") (2008), "*Danei Mitan linglinggou*"《大内密探零零狗》("*On His Majesty's Secret Service*") (2009), "*Daxiao Jianghu*"《大笑江湖》("*Just Call Me Nobody*") (2010), "*Shenqi Xialv*"《神奇侠侣》("*Mr. and Mrs. Incredible*") (2011), "*Diaosi Nanshi*"《屌丝男士》("*Diaosi Man*") (2012), "*Wanwan Mei Xiangdao*"《万万没想到》("*Unexpectedness*") (2013), "*Biao Xiao Gongtang*" 《包笑公堂》(2014), "*Mingzhentan Direnjie*"《名侦探狄仁杰》("*Di Renjie - The Famous Detective*")(2015), "*Huanxi Mitan*"《欢喜密探》("*Happy Secret Agent*") (2016)...... almost every year, in the list of the popular Chinese narratives (mainly refers to movies and web series) in China, we can find the name of the narratives which take

"*wulitou*" as its style of narration. So to speak, in approximately in the year 2000- 2015, *wulitou* style narrative reached its most flourishing period in China.

For example, in the year of 2013, as the list below shows, there are 7 web series with over 1 billion views, among which, four ones are *wulitou* style narratives (the asterisked ones in the list), and two ones are "fragmented comedies" which used *wulitou* style narrative devices (the ones that marked both "*" and "#").

The top 7 web series in 2013

	Name of the web series	Play amount (one hundred million)	Online date	Platform
1	Wanwan Mei Xiangdao 万万没想到 （Unexpectedness）1 *	9.14	06.Aug.2013.	Youku 优酷
2	Diaosi Nanshi 屌丝男士(Diors Man)2 * #	8.6	05.June.2013	Souhu 搜狐
3	Tangchao Hao Nanren 唐朝好男人 *	4.4	22.May.2013	Leshi 乐视
4	Jipin Nvshi 极品女士(第二季) Wonder lady (second season) * #	4.2	27.Nov.2013	Souhu 搜狐
5	Baogao Laoban 报告老板 *	3.81	19.Dec.2013	Youku 优酷
6	Wode Jipin Shi Qianren 我的极品是前任 *	3.5	09.May.2013	Souhu 搜狐
7	Wo Wei Kong Kuang 我为宫狂 1	1.8	01.Aug.2013	Tengxun 腾讯

We can also take some specific examples to illustrate the popularity of the "*wulitou*" narrative in China. Take the most popular web series from the year 2015 to 2016 in China, "*Taizifei Shengzhi Ji*"《太子妃升职记》（"*Go Princess Go*"）(2015) as an

example. How popular is the web series really? In a Xinhuanet's report[56], we find relevant data about it:

"单日播放量最高过 2 亿";

（The highest single-day play times online of it reached over 200 million）；

"在收官之际已取得了 26 亿的传奇播放量"；

（On the occasion of its ending, the play times totaled over 2.6 billion）；

"连续 10 天霸屏新浪微博话题总榜第 1 名"；

(The No.1 most discussed topic on Sina Micro-blog for ten consecutive days）；

Another popular web series,《万万没想到》("*Unexpectedness*") (2013-2015), as we have introduced before that, since it began to be broadcasted online in 2013 to the time when the first two seasons of it was over in 2015, "播放量共计超过 20 亿" ("the play times of it has already totaled over 2 billion")[57]; and in 2013, it was selected by the Chinese internet audiences as "2013 网络第一神剧" ("the top 1 Chinese web drama in 2013")[58]; in 2014, it got the accolade as "the most attractive web drama" at the "2014 中国大学生电视节" （"China Student Television Festival 2014")[59].

Question is: why in the last 20 years in China, it is "*wulitou*" narrative, which take both "anachronism" and "dislocation" as its prominent features, rather than other types of narratives, that become popular in China?

[56] Xinhua Yule 新华娱乐 Xinhua Entertainment, "26 yi +3.99 yi! Taizifei Shengzhiji Qinggong"《26 亿+3.99 亿！<太子妃升职记>庆功》29, Jan. 2016, http://www.xinhuanet.com/ent/2016-01/29/c_128682152.htm

[57] Xun Chao 荀超, " 'Wanwan Mei Xiangdao' Huigui, Wang Dacui Zoushang Resheng Dianfeng"《<万万没想到>回归，王大锤走上人生巅峰》, 04, Nov. 2015, 《华西都市报》(West China City Daily), From http://media.people.com.cn/n/2015/1104/c40606-27773815.html

[58] Luo Anji 洛安吉, " 'Wanwan Mei Xiangdao' Pin Shenme Chengwei 2013 Wangluo Diyi Shenju?"《<万万没想到>凭什么成为 2013 网络第一神剧？》From http://news.mtime.com/2013/11/28/1521112.html

[59] "Daxuesheng Dianshijie Bimu, Wanwan Zui Shou Daxuesheng Zhumu"《大学生电视节闭幕 <万万>"最受大学生瞩目"》, 27, Oct. 2014, From http://hebei.ifeng.com/detail_2014_10/27/3066324_0.shtml

CHAPTER 2: THE ACT OF SEEING, NARRATIVE AND MEDIA

2.1   The Act of Seeing Before Narrative

"Seeing comes before word. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak…it is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world…"[60], the words written by John Berger at the beginning of his famous book "*Ways of Seeing*", we may interpret it here as: it is what and how we see, decides what and how we express.

When we say "there is a man standing in front of a restaurant", it shows the focus of our sight is "the man"; while when we say "there's a restaurant with a man standing in front of it", it shows what acknowledged by our sight is "that restaurant".

Thus faced with the same scene, the way of our seeing is different, therefore, the way of our expression with words are different. In other words, different ways of seeing influences or decides how we express.

Seeing relies on the choice of the point of sight, and the moving of the line of sight. In this sense, the choice of the point of our vision and the moving of the line of our sights, influence the selection and combination of the content of our narrative.

Even if it is a fictional scene, when we make a narrative about it, the thing that firstly come to our mind, is still the pictures (the pictures of the scene in our imagination) which wait to be seen and described by us. To "describe" the fictional pictures that come to our mind , it also need our choice of the point of sight, and the moving of the line of sight, which is similar as when we dream, our eyeball will "move" with the change of the pictures, so that the point of sight can be switched to "see" the fiction scene in our dream.

Just image a simple fictional story as below:

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[60] John Berger, Ways of Seeing, London 1972.

A nervous cat jumped up on a table, knocked down a flower vase on the table, the flower vase rolled down onto the ground and smashed into pieces.

When our eyes focus on the beginning of the picture of the story, we may narrate it as:

The cat, which obviously was frightened, makes it fur stand on end, humps its back up, and jumps up on the table quickly.

When we put our eyes on picture of the middle stage of the story, then the narration could be:

The flower vase was suddenly knocked down with a "bang", a nervous cat wandered on the table uneasily, with its vigilant eyes watching around.

When we look at the picture of the last stage of the story, the narration now may become as:

With a "bang", the knocked down flower vast rolled down from the table onto the ground and smashed into pieces. The pieces of flower vast and the scattered flowers scattered on the ground.

While, when we disorder the time line, look at the last picture firstly, and then the beginning picture and the middle picture, our narration about the story may be like:

The flower vast rolled down on the ground, broke into pieces. It is a cat that knocked it down----when the cat, which obviously was frightened, jumped up on the table, it knocked the flower vast down.

In short, when we tell a story, no matter if it is real or fictional, what we tell and how we tell are influenced by what and how we see. In other words, narrative reflects or manifests the act of our seeing. As for a specific popular narrative style, it can be viewed as the manifestation of the popular way of seeing (what and how to see) in the society of a given historical period.

The difference of individual's psychological state and perceived experience may lead to different act of seeing. But how does a popular way of seeing, which accepted by most of the people in a society of a given historical period come into being?

"We only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice."[61] To find the answer to the question, we might as well start with the act of "choice" we make in the process of seeing. While, the act of "choice" of our sight has never been arbitrary, it is controlled by our perception and living environment, while it is seldom known to us.

2.2   Seeing as an Act of Choice

When we watch the American movie "*The God Must Be Crazy I*" (USA, 1980) and "*The God Must Be Crazy II*" (USA, 1989), it is not easy for us to ignore the extraordinary abilities of the Bushmen to survive in deep Kalahari desert where "there are 9 months in every year are drought without rain and surface water".

For most people, to live there means "he will die of thirsty in no more than a few days", but those Bushmen can live there quite well which as it is described in the film as: "live here quite unintentionally and completely live in harmony with their environment".

And the reason why they can live in Kalahari quite well is that they have a special ability to "read" information from the biological environment and utilize it: "In the morning they like to read news, they can read that the hyena has a new girlfriend, that the cheetahs lost one of her babies, the oryx started to migrate westward. The older children told the other ones how to read and discuss about their neighbor animals. Because every things that happened in Kalahari are printed on the sand."

Depending on the information obtained from their "reading", the Bushmen became "the only people to know how to survive out of surface water": "they can find the roots of the tubers and catch insects", and "they also know which fruit is more delicious, they know how to solve the water problem, in the evening they arrange the leaves so that in the morning they can receive dew......even the snakes are not terrible, as long as you can dodge".

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[61] Berger, John (1972). Ways of Seeing. London.

Although it is a movie, Bushmen's life in this movie can still be a good example to show us the influence of the geographical environment made on our choice about what we see. And undoubtedly, to us, the Bushmen's knowledge about their biological environment is so rich that we are impressed and shocked. But it is definitely not a single case, in fact this kind of phenomena is very common in the primitive world.

Opening any book that dealing with anthropological or ethnoecological studies, it is quite likely for you to find the materials about the primitive tribes' classification system, and be shocked by the amount of species of plants or animals the people of primitive tribes can recognize around them, such as it is shown as in the following materials:

> "Most Negrito men can with ease enumerate the specific or descriptive names of at least
> four hundred and fifty plants, seventy-five birds, most of the snakes, fish, insects, and
> animals, and of even twenty species of ants... "[62]

What about birds or plants in our contemporary society? Yes, we have them---- maybe they are not as much as they were in the environment where the primitive tribes lived ----but they are here. However, for an ordinary person today, how many kinds of bird or plant can they recognize?

Obviously, most of us have little real interest in paying attention to those things. Or, in other words, to compare with us, the people living in premodern conditions have much more passion about their biological environment, which as Claud Levi-Straus states: "Their extreme familiarity with their biological environment, the passionate attention which they pay to it and their precise knowledge of it has often struck inquirers as an indication of attitudes and preoccupations which distinguish the natives from their white visitors".[63]

People of the modern world, even if they live in the same geographical environment with the primitive tribes, they also rarely see and utilize the biological environment around them, which the primitive tribal people usually do:

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[62] Levi-Strauss, Claude (1966). The Savage Mind. London. P4-P5
[63] Levi-Strauss, Claude (1966).The Savage Mind. London. P5

> "Several thousand Coahuila India never exhausted the natural resources of a desert region in South California, in which today only a handful of white families manage to subsist. They lived in a land of plenty, for in this apparently completely barren territory, they were familiar with no less than sixty kinds of edible plants and twenty-eight others of narcotic, stimulant or medicinal properties (Barrwos)."[64]

Obviously, today the living conditions of these "white families" rely on modern commodities, rather than the natural resources gathered from the desert. So they are not usually eager to observer and learn the biological environment as those Coahuila Indians who lived in the same geographical environment with them.

Here, apparently not only the geographical environment, but also the development of technology and social environment, directly affect people's choice of the attention of their act of seeing. Similarly, for those who live by agriculture and those who earn a living from pastoral work or industry, the choice of the objects of their seeing are naturally not the same.

> "Agriculture differs from both pastoralism and industry. Farmers are necessarily connected to the land, whereas herdsmen drift about, following the water and the grass, and are forever unsettled. Industrial workers may choose where they live, and they may move without difficulty; but farmers cannot move their land or the crops they grow. Always waiting for their crops to mature, those old farmers seem to have planted half their bodies into the soil; it is this inability to move that causes farmers to appear so backward and sedentary...Indeed, those who must depend on farming seem to be stuck in the soil."[65]

Compared with those people who live in pastoral society or in industry society, people in the agricultural society are more immobile, therefore, the world they see are naturally more stable.

Thus, from the perspective of the act of seeing, one of the most important effects of technology and social environment on human beings firstly is that they can define and

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[64] Levi-Strauss, Claude (1966). The Savage Mind. London. P5

[65] Fei Xiaotong (1992), From the Soil, the Foundations of Chinese Society. Berkeley · Los Angeles · London. P38-P39

change the objects humans "choose" to see. For new technologies, this change is usually achieved by breaking the former spatio-temporal confinement.

For example, by allowing us to "see" the landscapes in the distant, photographs break spatio-temporal restrictions, extend our eyes, and expand the objects we can choose to see. The inventions of electric lights, automobiles, railways, televisions, etc., also play a similar role in extending human perception systems. In this sense, following McLuhan's definition "The media is the extensions of man". Herein, the media refer to all this kind of technological inventions (which can extend our perception) .

2.3 Media and the Way of Seeing

However as Su Shi 苏轼, a famous poet of Northern Song dynasty in ancient China wrote in his poem "*Ti Xilinbi*"《题西林壁》："横看成岭侧成峰，远近高低各不同" (seen horizontally, mountain ridges presented, vertically, mountain peaks come into sight; far or near, different heights appear in eyes."), what is present to us is not only influenced by the objects we choose to see, but also by the way of seeing.

Different medium may call for different way of seeing which adapted to it. For example, to read a book, normally, in the book, the sequence in which what are to be looked at "is proposed by the order of pages"[66], which means the way of seeing that the book calls for is a type of "continuous linear" way.

Another example: The photograph. As a medium, the photograph "denies interconnectedness, continuity"[67], while for it "confers on each moment the character of a mystery"[68], for the audiences of it, the photograph is an "inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation and fantasy.". [69]

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[66] Sontag Susan (1978). On Photography. UK: Allen Lane
[67] Sontag Susan (1978). On Photography. UK: Allen Lane
[68] Sontag Susan (1978). On Photography. UK: Allen Lane
[69] Sontag Susan (1978). On Photography. UK: Allen Lane

On the contrary, movie do not allow its audiences to "abandon himself to his associations", for "No sooner has his eye grasped a scene that it is already changed."[70] In the film, "the meaning of each single picture appears to be prescribed by the sequence of all preceding ones."[71]

The medium calls for a special way of seeing to adopt it. As a result, the way people participate in contemporary historical society is strongly influenced and shaped by the mainstream media in that particular society. Levis R. Bryant's words below---- Although what he writes is about the way humans grasp the ink pen, it can help us understand how media influence the way of our seeing.

> "The ink pen calls for certain way of being grasped. Not only does it likely have an effect on the form that muscle and bone morphology take over the course of repeated and continuous use, but it also generates various neurological schema or tendencies to grasp that, in their turn, close off other ways of grasping."[72]

Similarly, by calling for certain way to look at it, media reform the neurological schema or tendencies in our brain, and therefore, make the way of seeing it calls for become our habitual way to see the world, meanwhile, closing off other ways of seeing. In this sense, it is as McLuhan says "The effects of technology do not occur at the level of opinions or concepts, but alter sense ratios or patterns of perception steadily and without any resistance."[73]

And once the way of our seeing is reformed, it will definitely be reflected in the way of our express. Symbolism, Expressionism, Existentialism, Impressionism, Magical Realism, Surrealism, Post-Realism, Consciousness, Absurdist, etc.... At the end of the nineteenth century, the style of art experienced a rapid shift in trends. Parallel to this, is the rapid development of the media technology during this period. The parallel relationship between the two is obviously not an accident.

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[70] Benjamin, Walter (2008). The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. UK.
[71] Benjamin, Walter (2008). The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. UK
[72] Bryant, Levi R. (2014). Onto-cartography: An ontology of Machines and Media. Edinburgh. P20
[73] McLuhan, Marshall (2013). Understanding the Media - The Extensions of Man. California. P29

As McLuhan said, "It was at this moment of the movie that cubism occurred"[74], the occurrence of cubism, precisely because of the appearance of the movie make the way of humans' seeing is shifted from the "Specialized segments of attention" to "total field". While, what cubism did was: "by giving the inside and outside, the top, bottom, back, and front and the rest, in two dimensions, drops the illusion of perspective in favor of instant sensory awareness of the whole"[75], and suddenly declared: "The medium is the message."[76]

2.4   The Popularity of "*Wulitou*" Narrative and the Internet

If what we discuss above is verifiable, then it means the popularity of "*wulitou*" must have intimate relation with the internet, for as we noticed, the time of "*wulitou*" narrative obtaining popular in China happened to be synchronize with the time of the internet becoming popular in China.

A good proof of this point is a famous film's sudden popularity in China, the name of which is "*Dahua Xiyou*" "*A Chinese Odyssey*"《大话西游》(Hongkong China, 1995), as it was stated in the article "*Bei Dahua Xiyou Dianfu De Shijie*"《被〈大话西游〉颠覆的世界》("*The world converted by 'A Chinese Odyssey*'"): 它的"大热"几乎是和网络、网站在中国的兴起同步进行的 (The popularity of it ('*A Chinese Odyssey*') is almost in sync with the rise of the internet and the popularization of personal computers in China.)[77]

"*Dahua Xiyou*"《大话西游》("*A Chinese Odyssey*"), a fantasy-tragicomedy film, which was produced in 1994, and was released in both Hongkong China and mainland China in 1995, probably is the most famous and influential film at the close of the 20th century in China for the young generation. Even today, 20 years later after its release, it is still looked as an irreplaceable classic movie by many of its fans in China.

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[74] McLuhan, Marshall (2013). Understanding the Media - The Extensions of Man. California. P23

[75] McLuhan, Marshall (2013). Understanding the Media - The Extensions of Man. California. P23

[76] McLuhan, Marshall (2013). Understanding the Media - The Extensions of Man. California. P23

[77] Zhang Yue 张悦,"The World Converted by 'A Chinese Odyssey'" "被《大话西游》颠覆的世界", From http://news.sina.com.cn/o/2005-11-02/09317335537s.shtml

Loosely based on the Chinese tale "*Xi You Ji*"《西游记》("*Pilgrimage to the West*"), directed by Jeffrey Lau 刘镇伟 and starring Zhou Xingchi 周星驰（Stephen Chow), the film tells a love story across time and space about its protagonist Zhizunbao 至尊宝. And the film includes two parts: the first part "*Yueguang Baohe*"《月光宝盒》（"*Pandora's Box*"), and the second part "*Dasheng Quqin*"《大圣娶亲》("*Cinderella*").

From the perspective of visual narrative, the most impressive characteristic of the movie is its "*wulitou*" style narration. Although its setting is in the Tang Dynasty of China (A.D 618—A.D 907), in this film we can still find many things which are beyond the space-time of its setting.

For example, in the picture below, we can see Tang Seng 唐僧（Tang Monk) in this film is singing a song which adapted from the song *"Only you"*, a popular American song in the 20th Century.

Tang Seng is singing "Only you". Captured from "*Dahua Xiyou*" (Hongkong China, 1995)

And the picture below concerns Zhu Bajie 猪八戒, an important role in this film, who is saying to his wife："娘子呀，跟牛魔王出来看上帝"（"Daring, come out with Niu Mowang to have a look of Jesus Christ (a call of god, which does not fit in the setting of the story of this film)!"

"Daring, come out with Niu Mowang to have a look of Jesus Christ !". Captured from "*Dahua Xiyou*"

(Hongkong China, 1995)

From the next picture, we can see what the two roles wear are Ballet Costumes.

What the two roles wear are Ballet Costumes. Captured from "*Dahua Xiyou*" (Hongkong China, 1995)

In 1995, when it began to be released in the mainland of China, the film "*Dahua Xiyou*" 《大话西游》 ("*A Chinese Odyssey* ") failed to become the audience's favorite. "甚至在内地被评为当年的 '十大最差引进片' ("It was even named as 'the top ten

worst introduced film' in the mainland of China") [78] . The texts blow can help us get a glimpse of how unsuccessful it once was in China during that time :

"1996 年 2 月《月光宝盒》作为寒假影片推出，5 月《大圣娶亲》登场，两部影片均只以 20 万左右的票房收场，有的电影公司在放映两天后就决定以国产影片换掉《大话西游》以免更多损失。" [79]

("In Feb. 1996, '*Pandora's Box*', the first part of '*A Chinese Odyssey*' , was released in the winter holiday, and in May. 1996, '*Cinderella*', the second part of '*A Chinese Odyssey*', was also released, but the box offices of both of the two parts were only about 200,000 RMB. Some film companies even replaced it with other Chinese movies within two days after its release, in order to avoid more losses.")

"在沈阳，排着长队买电影票的观众进场后，不等结束就骂骂咧咧大呼上当，中途退场；在上海虽然前期看好，但是与同期上演的电影相比，票房仍然平淡. " [80]

("In Shenyang, the audiences who lined up to buy the movie ticket, after they entered in the projection room of this movie, many of them could not wait for its ending, they stopped watching it with complaints and exited in advance. In Shanghai, although during the beginning of its screening, many people showed their willing to watch it, but compare to other movies which released at the same time with it, the box office of it was still low...")

"在引进这部片子时，各电影公司经理就不太看好这部影片，觉得'太吵太闹'，作为不被看好的电影... " [81]

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[78] Tangmi Yule Zixun 唐咪娱乐资讯, "Dannian Zhuanjia Ping Dahua Xiyou Shi Laji, Xianzai Cheng Chuanshi Jingdian" "当年专家评大话西游是垃圾，现在成传世经典", From http://mini.eastday.com/mobile/161107110344054.html

[79] Zhang Yue 张悦, "Bei Dahua Xiyou Tianfu De Shijie" 《被《大话西游》颠覆的世界》 "The world converted by 'A Chinese Odyssey' ", From http://news.sina.com.cn/o/2005‐11‐02/09317335537s.shtml

[80] Tangmi Yule Zixun 唐咪娱乐资讯, "Dannian Zhuanjia Ping Dahua Xiyou Shi Laji, Xianzai Cheng Chuanshi Jingdian""当年专家评大话西游是垃圾，现在成传世经典", From http://mini.eastday.com/mobile/161107110344054.html

[81] Zhang Yue 张悦, "Bei Dahua Xiyou Tianfu De Shijie" 《被《大话西游》颠覆的世界》 "The world converted by 'A Chinese Odyssey' ", From http://news.sina.com.cn/o/2005‐11‐02/09317335537s.shtml

("When it was introduced in the mainland, the managers of film companies already gave disparaging comments about it, they thought it was 'too noisy'...")

While it was never to be expected at that time that a "low" and "noisy" film, could suddenly become the hottest film in China, it really happened: in around 1997-1998, about 2 year later, it suddenly became fashionable in China. About the process how it became popular and how popular it was, there are many articles mention about it, below is a paragraph quoted from one of these articles:

"1996 年，结束影院惨淡经营的《大话西游》将拷贝传到电影学院. . . . . 这部电影以一种不可知的方式迅速在大学蔓延，并且高热不退. . . . 此后《大话西游》正式进入"火爆期". . . . 它的"大热"几乎是和网络、网站在中国的兴起同步进行的，1999 年、2000 年则进入《大话西游》的最鼎盛时期。"[82]

("In 1996, after its dismal operation in cinemas, the copies of the movie '*A Chinese Odyssey*'《大话西游》got available in the film Academy. This movie therefore spread rapidly and became popular among Chinese university students. Since then, '*A Chinese Odyssey*' officially began to enter its "The hottest period". Between 1999 and 2000, it entered its most prosperous period in China."), its "big fever" is almost in sync with the rise of the internet in China.

There are two points need us pay attention here:

1, The time for "*Dahua Xiyou*"《大话西游》("*A Chinese Odyssey* ") became popular was synchronized with the time the internet became popular in China.

2, It became popular from the Universities in China, and the university student of the year around 1998, is the main body of "the first generation" of Chinese internet users.

Although we cannot thereby draw the conclusion that the popularity of *wulitou* narrative is induced by the rise of internet in China, one point is certain that in terms of

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[82] Zhang Yue 张悦, "Bei Dahua Xiyou Tianfu De Shijie"《被《大话西游》颠覆的世界》"The world converted by 'A Chinese Odyssey' ", From http://news.sina.com.cn/o/2005-11-02/09317335537s.shtml

time, the popularity of "*wulitou*" has affinities with the rising popularity of internet in China.

But question is: **why it is "*wulitou*", rather than other style of narrative is getting popular in China with the rise of internet?**

CHAPTER 3: THE WAY OF SEEING CORRESPONDING TO "*WULITOU*" NARRATIVE

3.1 The Spatio- Temporal Dimension of Seeing

> "Most human beings believe that... they are the single and active protagonists of their own existence; that their existence operates through continuous time within a consistent, causally interconnected reality; and that inside this reality events happen for explainable and meaningful reasons. Since our first ancestor stared into a fire of his own making and thought the thought, "I am," this is how human beings have seen the world and themselves in it."

If the words said by Robert McKee above are true, then there seems really no reason for *wulitou* style narrative to get popular, as a kind of "non-canonical" or abnormal narrative mode, which often "deliberately combine or distort somethings or some phenomenon which have no connection by some unintelligible way", and thus the chains of causality are usually broken, apparently, "*wulitou*" is outside the ways of "how human being have seen the world and themselves in it", and will naturally make "the mind rebels."[83]

But it did get popular! Since "what and how we see, decide what and how we express", that is to say there must be a specific way of seeing ,which is different from the way as Robert McKee described above, while is corresponding to the way of *wulitou* style narrative, and already get popular in China. But what is it?

Image there is an underwater scene in front of you, which is "characterized by having one or more 'focal' fish" that are "larger, brighter, and faster-moving than anything else"

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[83] McKee, Robert (1997), Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting, New York. P62

in the scene, and the scene also contains "less rapid moving animals, as well as plants, rocks, bubbles, ect"[84], and the underwater scene will last for approximately 20 seconds.

Then how will you choose to look at the scene? Most possibly, you are immediately attracted in this scene by some "focal" fish, then, you choose to focus your sight on the "focal" fish. Here we name the way of your seeing like this "way A".

If you choose "way A", it means your eyeballs will keep moving with the swimming in the water of the "focal" fish, and every move of your eye balls means there is a shift of the location of the "focal" fish in the water. Different locations of the "focal" fish in the water are present to us as different pictures. Meanwhile, these different pictures are strung together by your perception with the orders they happened in the time line, and constitute consistently as a series of moving pictures, that is what the scene is presenting to us in the 20 second by the seeing way A.

"Way A" is a typical way of seeing, which "operates through continuous time within a consistent, causally interconnected reality". Here, the temporal dimension plays an important role during the process of our seeing, for every picture "captured" by your eyes are strung together in the time line. Therefore, we take "Way A" as a way of seeing in the temporal dimension.

But you may also choose to look at both the "focal" fish and the background elements (water, rocks, bubbles, inert plants and animals). As for the act of seeing like this way, we can also give it a name: "way B".

To choose "way B" means your sight line will shift between the "focal" fish and all the background elements constantly. And each time, with the shift of the line of your sight, what you see is different, for example, in the last second, what you see is the focal fish, and in this second, what you see are the plants, while in the next second, what you see may be the bubbles.

Meanwhile, these different pictures of what you see will also be assembled by your perception, while this time, it is not operated in the temporal dimension, but most possibly, in the spatial dimension ---- in the spatial dimension, these pictures are

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[84] Nisbett, Richard E. (2003). The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently…and Why. New York. P89-P90

collaged as a whole image about the scene, which may include much more spatial information, for example, the plants are on the left of the focal fish, the less rapid moving animals are on the stones etc., That is, in the spatial dimension, what is present to us is a collage, which is collaged with the objects in our sight, in accordance with the spatial relations between them. Obviously, Way B represents a way of seeing, which operates in the spatial dimension.

Seeing in the spatial dimension means perceive objects by constituting the spatial relations between them, and take them together as a whole in the space. Whereas, in the temporal dimension, things are different. Time means change, means we "pass from one state to state", and these different states, which have different names, such as "last second", "this second", "next second"; Or "in the past", "now", "in the future"; Or "in the childhood", "in the teenagers", "in the twenties"... Or, "last week", "this week" and "next week",.. Or "work time", "sleep time".... they give us a feeling like:

> "...each of my states as if it formed a block and were a separate whole. I say indeed that
> I change, but the change seems to me to reside in the passage from one state to the next:
> of each state, taken separately, I am apt to think that it remains the same during all the
> time it prevails... "[85]

But the truth is that the changes are unceasing, what we see in the temporal dimension, has a kind of apparent discontinuity, only because "our attention has distinguished and separated the changes artificially"[86]. Or in other words, "actually there is only a gentle slope; but in following the broken line of our acts of attention, we think we perceive separate steps."[87]

It means to see in the temporal dimension, we need firstly distinguish and separate what we see into segments, and then classify and string these segments into a chain, in accordance with the orders they happened in the timeline, to constitute what is present to us in the temporal dimension. That is, in the temporal dimension, we see things with segmentation, classification and causality.

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[85] Bergson, Henri (2008). Creative Evolution. New York. P10
[86] Bergson, Henri (2008). Creative Evolution. New York. P11
[87] Bergson, Henri (2008). Creative Evolution. New York. P11

Obviously, the so-called "classic design" story, the fictional reality of which is "a consistent and causally connection fictional reality"[88], is the product of the seeing way of human being in the temporal dimension.

And when Robert McKee wrote "this is how human beings have seen the world and themselves in it", what came to his mind, must also be the way of seeing in the temporal dimension, while the one that is ignored by him, or in other words, the one that did not attract enough attention from him, apparently is the way of seeing in the spatial dimension.

Although we talk about temporal dimension and spatial dimension separately above, but what we should make clear and keep in mind is that space and time, the two ones always go together. "There is no space that does not have its temporal dimension and implications, nor is there any time that does not have its spatial dimension and implications."[89]

And since everything exists in space and time, each act of seeing must happen in a particular spatio-temporal dimension, that is, each act of seeing always implicates both a particular time and a specific location.

For example, when we face the underwater scene, and choose the way of seeing in the spatial dimension, what is present to us may include the focal fish, less rapid moving animals, plants, rocks, bubbles, as well as the spatial relations between those things, but the view of all these things are present only at the specific moment when we take a glance at them.

While facing the underwater scene, if we choose the way of seeing in the temporal dimension, what is present to us is the chain of the movements of the focal fish, but for each movement of the focal fish, there is a particular location corresponding to it.

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[88] McKee, Robert (1997). Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting. New York. P45

[89] Bryant, Levi R. (2014). Onto-cartography: An ontology of Machines and Media. Edinburgh. P141

Of course, in reality, when we face an underwater scene, we may choose the way of seeing, perhaps neither A nor B, but some way in between. However, whatever any given way of seeing you may choose, it must be presented to us in a spatio-temporal dimension, for everything exists in space and time.

Only that sometimes we may tend to see the things in the temporal dimension (or in the spatial dimension) more often; Or, some of us may tend to see the world in the temporal dimension (or in the spatial dimension) more often.

And what's interesting is, it seems that this kind of "tendency" is not completely arbitrary nor irregular, for example, facing the same underwater scene, the psychologists found that the Westerners choose to see it in the way which is similar to "Way A" (seeing in the temporal dimension) much more often; while the Asians choose to see it in the way which is close to Way B" (seeing in the spatial dimension) much more often.

That is, it seems that normally "Asians pay more attention to the environment than the Westerners"[90], they notice "many more changes in the objects in the background", and many more "changes in the relations between objects."[91] Whereas, "Westerners would be quicker to grasp alterations in salient foreground objects than Easterners would be".[92]

If that's true, then question is: what influences the spatio-temporal dimension "tendency" of the way of our seeing?

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[90] Nisbett, Richard E. (2003). The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently…and Why. New York. P95

[91] Nisbett, Richard E. (2003), The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently…and Why. New York. P93

[92] Nisbett, Richard E. (2003). The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently…and Why. New York. P93

Lessing says in "*Laocoon: An Essay upon the Limits of Painting and Poetry*": "...painting employs wholly different signs or means of imitation from poetry, -- the one using forms and colors in space, the other articulate sounds in time …" [93]

And for the signs (figures and colors) employed by painting, are "juxtaposed in space", painting advocate us to see things in the spatial dimension: ".....painting, because its signs or means of imitation can be combined only in space, must relinquish all representations of time, therefore progressive actions, as such, cannot come within its range...signs arranged side by side can represent only objects existing side by side, or whose parts so exist...Objects which exist side by side, or whose parts so exist, are called *bodies*. Consequently, bodies with their visible properties are the peculiar subjects of painting." [94]

Whilst since the signs (sounds) employed by poetry "flow in the time", poetry advocate us to see things in the temporal dimension: "...consecutive signs can express only objects which succeed each other, or whose parts succeed each other, in time....Objects which succeed each other, or whose parts succeed each other in time, are actions. Consequently, actions are the peculiar subjects of poetry. "[95]

Although Lessing' words may not be applicable to all forms of painting and poetry (for example, Classical Chinese Poetry), his thought still enlightened us that the different spatio-temporal dimension "tendency" of our way of seeing is not natural, it may be influenced or shaped strongly by the medium we contact often in our daily life. About this point, a good and typical example, may be Chinese character and Latin word.

As a kind of communication medium as well as a type of sign, Chinese character originated from image. Since the dots and lines employed by Chinese character, similarly like the figures and colors employed by painting, are "juxtaposed in space", to distinguish a Chinese character, we need to perceive the dots and lines as a whole in the spatial dimension.

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[93] Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim (1877). Laocoon: An Essay upon the Limits of Painting and Poetry. Boston. P91
[94] Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim (1877). Laocoon: An Essay upon the Limits of Painting and Poetry. Boston. P90- P91
[95] Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim (1877). Laocoon: An Essay upon the Limits of Painting and Poetry. Boston. P91

Whereas, since the letters employed by Latin words "flowed in the time", to distinguish a Latin word, we need separate these letters with our eyes into different syllables firstly, and then string those syllables according to the linear order in temporal dimension.

Therefore, Chinese character tends to call for the way of seeing in the spatial dimension; while Latin word tends to call for the way of seeing in the temporal dimension----That could be regarded as one of the explanations about why the percentage of Chinese people that are used to the way of seeing in the spatial dimension is higher than that of the Westerners.

As we said before that "what and how we see, decide what and how we express", if it is really true that with this comparison to the West, Chinese tend to see things in the spatial dimension more often, then it should be manifested naturally by the way of Chinese to arrange words when they use words in languages to describe things ------ Can we find examples about it?

The answer is "yes" ---- thanks to the great number of studies cognitive linguists conducted, which revealed that the Chinese linguistic structure do have some obvious differences to the Latin languages (eg. English).

For example, in a sentence of English, if the head-word is a noun, then the noun (referring to the "salient foreground objects") usually is placed at the beginning (the left side) of the sentence, and the other adjunct words (used to describe the "background") generally are put after the noun, that is, in English, the words are arranged following the sequence from "salient foreground object" to "background"; While in a sentence of Chinese, if the head-word is a noun, it usually is placed at the end (the right side) of the sentence, and the other adjunct words generally are put before the noun, that is, in Chinese, the words are arranged following the sequence from "background" to "salient foreground object", for example:

The man watering flowers in front of the tree in the yard.

（在院子里的那棵树前浇花的**那个人**。）

And if the head-word is a verb, in English sentences, the verb is also placed at the beginning (the left) of the sentence, and other adjunct words of the verb are put after the verb. While in a sentence of Chinese, the other adjunct words of verb usually are put before the verb, for example:

He **<u>stood up</u>** quickly from the seat with a smile.

（他微笑着很快地从座位上<u>站了起来</u>。）

To borrow the terms of "figure/ground segregation" (perceptual prominence) theory, obviously, the English-speaking people tend to observe the "figure" ("salient foreground object") firstly, and then the "ground" ("background"/ "environment"); while the Chinese-speaking people tend to observe the "ground" ("background") firstly; and then the "figure" ("salient foreground object"). In this sense, it is as Richard Nisbett says, "Asians pay more attention to the environment than the Westerners"[96], they notice "many more changes in the objects in the background", and many more "changes in the relations between objects." [97] Whereas, "Westerners would be quicker to grasp alterations in salient foreground objects than Easterners would be".[98]

3.2   The Way of Seeing Corresponding to *Wulitou* Narrative

Since each act of seeing happens in a particular spatio-temporal dimension, and different medium calls for different spatio-temporal dimension of the way of seeing, and as we have said in our last chapter that the popularity of *wulitou* style narrative may have close affinity with the internet, so, to ask "what is the specific way of seeing correspond to the way of *wulitou* style narrative", we might as well ask firstly: "what kind of spatio-temporal dimension of the way of seeing does the internet calls for?"

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[96] Nisbett, Richard E. (2003). The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently…and Why. New York. P95

[97] Nisbett, Richard E. (2003). The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently…and Why. New York. P93

[98] Nisbett, Richard E. (2003). The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently…and Why. New York. P93

The content of the internet normally are regarded as a Hybrid, which as Nicholas Carr describes: "A single Web page may contain a few chunks of text, a video or audio stream, a set of navigational tools, various advertisements, and several small software applications, or 'widgets,' running in their won widows."[99]

While "hybrid" is not merely manifested by the content of the internet, the contents of other media, for example, the contents of newspapers, are also hybrid: local news, global news, economic news, sports news, political news... as well as the advertisements, serial stories and cartoons and the editor's note are all put together into the same newspaper.

However, the contents of newspaper as a "hybrid" is still different from the content "hybrid" of the internet: although there may no inner relations between the different contents on a same newspaper, the contents of newspaper are always distinguished and classified by date and the objects they report. As a consequence, on a same newspaper, what are published usually are the news happened at a similar time; and the news of similar category are usually put into the same page of the newspaper.

If it as we said before, that the arrangement of words reflects how we see the world, then, we might as well say that although it also looks like a "hybrid", the arrangement of the contents of a newspaper, essentially obey to the natural law of the way of seeing in the temporal dimension, for as we said before that "separation" and "classification" are the prominent features of the way of seeing in the temporal dimension.

While different from newspaper or other media, interaction and multimedia hypertext are the most important features of the internet, which make us have an ability to "jump" often between different contents, while without any natural spatio-temporal restrictions. For example, image last second, what we read online is the news happened recently, while this second we can jump from it immediately to "old news" that happened about 20 years ago.

As a consequence, on the internet, the natural law of space-time seems to lose its effect, time becomes "timelessness"; "simultaneity" becomes the dominant existing state of

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[99] Carr, Nicholas (2010), The Shallows: What Internet Is Doing to Our Brains, New York. London, P66

things, which as Manuel Castells says : "…the mixing of times in the media, within the same channel of communication and at the choice of the viewer/interactor, creates a temporal collage, where not only genres are mixed, but their timing becomes synchronous in a flat horizon, with no beginning, no end, no sequence."[100]

And thus, just like objects that float in Universe, things are "floating" randomly in the space of the internet, waiting to be collaged into any context. As a result, what's presented before us online can be described as "the crazy quilt of Web content".[101]

So, "what kind of spatial-temporal dimension does the way of seeing the internet calls for?" Or "what is the specific way of seeing, which corresponds to the way of *wulitou* style narrative"?

When we are facing the vast amounts of contents which is "floating randomly in the space of the internet", we have to develop an ability that picks up the useful contents out of them quickly for ourselves, and collage what we picked up together into its entirety, meanwhile give meaning to it. And the *wulitou* narrative, obviously, is the product of this kind of ability developed with the popularity of the internet.

That is why contrary to the classic fictional reality created by human being, which is "a consistent and causally connection fictional reality"[102], in the fictional reality of *wulitou* narrative, the "inconsistency" and "non-causally connection" appear often.

As we said "seeing in the spatial dimension means perceiving objects by constituting the spatial orders and relations between things, and collage things together as a whole." In this sense, I would like to suggest that the way of seeing the internet calls for, or in other words, the specific way of seeing, which is corresponding to the way of *wulitou* style of narrative, is a kind of way that is kind of close to the way of seeing in the spatial dimension, while here "the spatial dimension" is not the spatial dimension in the common sense (which implied a space with particular time), it is a spatial dimension without particular time (timeless).

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[100] Castells, Manuel (2010). The Rise of the Network Society.–2nd edition. UK
[101] Carr, Nicholas (2010), The Shallows: What Internet Is Doing to Our Brains, New York. London. P67
[102] Carr, Nicholas (2010), The Shallows: What Internet Is Doing to Our Brains, New York. London. P45

And, if the internet has changed or is changing the way of seeing of Chinese internet users, then it will naturally be manifested by the way of Chinese internet users to arrange the words they use. To illustrate it, let us take the internet popular sentence patterns as an example:

"世界上最要遥远的距离是 X，而不是 Y" (The furthest distance in the world is not X, but Y). "Not X, but Y" is a common compound sentences pattern in the Chinese language, which is composed of two clauses which are in a parallel relation, and the "X" and "Y" which separately are in the related clauses usually belong to a same category ---- here we borrow the examples given by Xiao Dan-qing 肖丹青 and Liu Chu-qun 刘楚群 in their article "论网络调侃句式 '世界上最遥远的距离不是 X，而是 Y'"（*The Analysis of Network Tease Sentence Pattern "The furthest distance in the world is not X but Y"*)[103] to show it:

"今天不是星期天，而是星期二"。("Today is not Sunday, but Tuesday.")

"他不是教你诈，而是教你看清世事"。("He does not teach you to swindle others, but teaches you to see the world clearly.")

In the first example, the X and Y in this sentence are both noun about date. And in the second example, the X and Y are both actions of teaching.

While different from the normal way of the use of the compound sentences "Not X, but Y", "网络调侃句世界上最远的距离不是 X 而是 Y"并没有遵循传统 "不是 X 而是 Y" 中 X 和 Y 的句法功能对称性的规则，表现出句法功能上的不对称性。" (The Network Tease Sentence Pattern "The furthest distance in the world is not X but Y" , does not follow the rules of syntactic symmetry of X and Y in the traditional "not X but Y", while shows its syntactic asymmetry). For examples:

"世界上最遥远的距离，不是生与死，而是你在网通我却在电信"。

[103] Xiao Dan-qing 肖丹青 and Liu Chu-qun 刘楚群, "论网络调侃句式 '世界上最遥远的距离不是 X，而是 Y'" (" The Analysis of Network Tease Sentence Pattern 'The furthest distance in the world is not X but Y'"), In "江西教育学院报（社会科学）"（"Journal of Jiangxi Institute of Education (social Sciences)"）, (2013.8)

("The furthest distance in the world is not between life and death, but the communication network you use is China Netcom, while the communication network I use is China Telecom".)

"世界上最遥远的距离，不是生与死，而是想看中国足球进入世界杯"。

("The farthest distance in the world, is not between life and death, but the wish to see Chinese football enter the World Cup".)

In the examples above, obviously, neither the X ("between life and death,") and the Y (the communication network you use is China Netcom, while the communication network I use is China Telecom") in the first example, nor the X ("is not between life and death,") and the Y ("the wish to see Chinese football enter the World Cup") in the second one belong to a same category.

That is, when the internet users express themselves with the compound sentences pattern "Not X, but Y" , they obviously adopt a more random way to arrange words, from the perspective of seeing, it means the way of their seeing are getting more random and shows a kind of "jumping" character---- they jump their sight randomly from one domain to another domain---- just like what they often do online.

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Since the content of "*wulitou*" narrative, may be followed and collaged without any restriction of natural space-time laws, to comprehend a *wulitou* narrative, it requires the audience to get used to collaging different things without any inner spatial-temporal relations, and putting them into a whole, by constantly building relations between them. Otherwise it will be hard for them to comprehend and accept the narrative.

For example, a retired teacher living in Beijing, in 2013 when he was interviewed by the 中国青年报 ("*China Youth Daily*"), he told the reporter that when he watched with together his grandson the web series 《万万没想到》 ("*Unexpectedness*"), "（他）既跟不上演员的语速，更不明白台词背后的典故，而片中一会儿现代一会儿古代

的叙事思维更让他理解不了，而孙子却对着视频哈哈大笑。 " [104] (he can neither keep up with the actors' speed of speech, nor get the point of the dialogues between the actors, and what makes him more confused is its strange way of narration, which "jumps" often between the modern space-time and ancient space-time. While his grandson obviously enjoy the web series very much, for he laughs happily and often when he watches it.")

This is not a single case, about four years ago, I once invited my parents with me together to watch the film 《万万没想到》(*"Unexpectedness"*) (2015), which has the same name with the popular web series 《万万没想到》(*"Unexpectedness"*), and is produced by the same production team of the latter, therefore, no surprise that the style of its narration is also a *wulitou* style. When watching this film, I found my parents obviously didn't like it. The comments they gave on the film were "看不懂"("can't get its meaning"), "瞎胡闹" ("fooling around").

It seems the *wulitou* narratives are mainly welcomed by younger people. Relevant data seems have also proved this point. The data from Youku (one of China's top online video and streaming service platforms) in 2014 shows, "根据优酷的统计，这部剧 90% 左右的观众年龄在 30 岁以下" ("about 90% of the audience of the web series 《万万没想到》("*Unexpectedness*") is under the age of 30.") [105]

For another popular web series 《太子妃升职记》("*Go go my princess*") (2015), according to the data released from iVideo Tracker, a web video market monitoring system launched by 艾瑞咨询 (iResearch), 93% of the audiences of it are under the age of 40. [106]

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[104] Sun Zhen 孙震, Sun Feng 孙峰, "90.9%受访者看过网络自制剧" ("90.0% interviewees have watched Web Series")，in "中国青年报" ("China Youth Daily"), 07. Nov. 2013, From
http://zqb.cyol.com/html/2013-11/07/nw.D110000zgqnb_20131107_3-07.htm
[105] Yi Ming 伊明，"Wanwan Mei Xiangdao Ni Neng Zheme Huo" "万万没想到你能这么火", in《财经天下》周刊 ("Economic Weekly"), 03. Nov. 2014, From
http://finance.sina.com.cn/roll/20141103/152220717465.shtml
[106] Ai Rui 艾瑞: "Go Go Princess" Biaoxian Liangyan, 90hou Cheng Shoushi Zhuli" "《太子妃升职记》表现亮眼，90 后成收视主力", 2016.3.10, From http://www.sohu.com/a/62409147_118197

However, we can still find some older audiences enjoy the *wulitou* narrative. For example, a friend of mine told me that her mother (aged over 55) also liked to watch 《万万没想到》 ("*Unexpectedness*").

As we said, the specific way of seeing associated with the *wulitou* narrative is a way which is inclined to the way of seeing in the spatial dimension without particular time (timeless). It means rather than to say it is age that prevents some people from accepting a *wulitou* narrative, it is better to say that whether the audiences can adapt to the way of seeing associated with the *wulitou* narrative or not, decide whether they can accept *wulitou* narrative or not.

Since the ability to constantly constitute relations between the different things which have no inner spatio-temporal relations, could be developed with the use of internet. Logically, the experienced internet users might be more used to the way of seeing corresponding to *wulitou* narrative, and are better at connecting the different things in different time-space together.

The fact proved this point: my friend's mother who enjoys watching 《万万没想到》 ("*Unexpectedness*") is an experienced internet user, while four years ago my parents were not accustomed to the internet yet. In this sense, rather than to say *wulitou* are welcomed by the youth in China, it is better to say that *wulitou* are welcomed by Chinese internet users.

The reason that it seems most of the fans of "*wulitou*" narratives are younger people, is perhaps because the rise of internet in China is comparatively recent. It was only in the late 1990s when the internet became popular in China. And at that time, most of the internet users are university students and young office employees ---- they were called the first generation of internet users in China. That is, during its most popular period (from the end of 1990s to the mid-2010s) in China, the audiences of *wulitou* narrative were mostly the younger people.

CHAPTER 4: *WULITOU* NARRATIVE AND POSTMODERNISM

If it as we said the popularity of *wulitou* has close affinity with the internet, then question is: are there also *wulitou* narratives in the developed western countries (which has advanced internet services)?

Of course, the answer is yes, there are also *wulitou* style narratives in Western countries, for example, in the film "*Monty Python and the Holy Grail*" (British/1975) and "*The Adventures of Picasso* (Sweden/1978)", "*Hot Shots! Part Deux*" (U.S.A/1993) we can find many *wulitou* style scenes.

Only that *wulitou* appears not to be as popular in the developed western countries as it is in China ---- But why? Why *wulitou* became popular in China rather than in the developed western countries, even though the internet services in these countries may be more advanced than in China?

Normally the internet is regarded to be part of postmodernism, therefore, to answer the question, we had better put the topic in a much broader cultural context ---- the postmodernism cultural context, to do further analysis.

But firstly, what on earth is postmodernism? And furthermore, what is modernism and premodernism? From the perspective of the act of seeing, we try to give our own answers to these questions.

4.1   Premodernism, Modernism and Postmodernism

If somebody told you that there is something happened, for example, a car fells into a river, you may ask immediately "when?" ---- We are sensitive to the time of events happening ---- we record the specific times of things happening in diaries: the news, the documentaries, the historical books…Even in the photo album, under each photo, we also usually carefully note the time when taken.

But when we read the archaic stories spread among the civilian population, we find normally most of these stories begin with "Long long ago…"or "Once upon a time…" ---- there is no specific times about when the stories happened ---- time seem not as important as it is in nowadays. But why?

Many of us have played the game of "spread through word of mouth": to pass information through the word of mouth one by one in a team. When the information reached the last person, it found that normally the version of the information had already gotten obviously different from the original one.

Considering that in ancient society, the stories were mainly spread and preserved by people's word of mouth, it seemed to be inevitable that as time went by, the times of stories were becoming more and more blurred ---- In this sense, to put time in an unimportant position seemed not because the ancient peoples were willing to (or meant to) do so, but they had to do so, or they had no choice. But is it just the case?

In his book "*The Myth of the Eternal Return: Or, Cosmos and History*", Mircea Eliade mentioned an interesting story: "the Romanian folklorist Constantin Brailoiu had occasion to record an admirable ballad in a village in Maramusres", the subjects of which was "a tragedy of love". And it was told that the tragedy was "a very old story, which had happened 'long ago'" , however, the folklorist learned that in fact "the event had taken place not quite forty years earlier". And "He finally even discovered that the heroine was still alive". From the heroine's own lips, the folklorist found it was just "a quite commonplace tragedy". Thus "despite the presence of the principal witness, a few years had suffered to trip the event of all historical authenticity, to transform it into a legendary tale". [107]

What is even more interesting is that when the folklorist tried to "drew the villagers in attention to the authentic version", the villagers refused to accept it, but insisted on

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[107] Eliade, Mircea (1959). The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History. New York. P44-45

holding the mythical version. Here, "It was the myth that told the truth: the real story was already only a falsification"[108] .

What on earth the attractive features did the mythical version have, so that it easily made the villager preferred to accept it as the truth, while pretended that the real story was only a falsification? ---- Even though "Almost all the people of the village had been contemporaries of the authentic historical fact."[109] and had chance to find out the real story?

To answer the question, we need compare the mythical version of the tragedy and the authentic version of it firstly, to see what are the differences between them.

The mythical version:

> "(long ago,) The young suitor had been bewitched by a mountain fairy, and a few days before he was to married, the fairy, driven by jealousy, had flung him from a cliff. The next day, shepherds found his body and, caught in a tree, his hat. They carried the body back to the village and his fiancée came to meet them, upon seeing her lover dead, she poured out a funeral lament, full of mythological allusions, a liturgical text of rustic beauty."

The authentic version:

> "(about forty years earlier,) One evening her lover had slipped and fallen over a cliff; he had not died instantly; his cries had been heard by mountaineers; he had been carried to the village, where he had died soon after. After the funeral, his fiancée, with the other women of the village, had repeated the customary ritual lamentations, without the slightest allusion to the mountain fairy."

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[108] Eliade, Mircea (1959). The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History. New York. P46
[109] Eliade, Mircea (1959). The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History. New York. P45

Here, there are two questions about the differences between the mythical version and the authentic version need our special attention:

1, Why was the time of the tragedy happened modified from "forty years earlier " in the authentic version to "long ago" in the mythical version?

2, Why was the event about "how the young suitor had fallen over a cliff" modified from "he had slipped and had fallen over a cliff (by accident)" in the authentic version to "he had been bewitched and flung" by a jealous "mountain fairy" from a cliff in the mythical version?

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Firstly, About the time this tragedy had happened. In the mythical version, it is a tragedy happened "long ago", while, in fact it "had taken place not quite forty years earlier", even "the heroine was still alive" ---- Maybe for the villager, forty years was quite long enough to give them the excuse to forget the special time of the event, and replace it with "long ago". But is it the only reason here to use "long ago" so as to replace "forty years ago"?

We go to school or go to work every day, day after day, week after week….it is circulating and repeating continuously, so that we are so familiar with it that we almost get insensitive about it ---- if there are no special reasons, we will not deliberately remember every specific moment or every specific thing happening before our eyes in each day (for example, what time and what kind of email you have written, or what time and what kind of classroom work you have done) ---- what we only need to remember is the behavioral pattern of our study or work (for example, how to begin our study or work; and how to follow the classroom rules, or how to write an email etc.,)

What matters in our daily study or work, it is not the specific things and moments (the objects and the acts) repeated before our eyes every day, but the patterns you should follow in your daily study or work.

Pattern are constructed with the relations between things (daily aspects of our lives) and time. Therefore, it is not to say the things and the time in our repeated daily life are valueless, but to say that the values of them does not exist in the specific moments and specific things daily repeated before our eyes, while they exist in the conceptual things and times which constructed the patterns in our daily life.

For the same reason, it should not be strange for us to discover that the archaic man, whose daily life was also a life of repetition, did not put value on the specific things (the objects of the external world and human acts) repeated in their daily life. In fact, for the archaic people, "neither the objects of the external world nor human acts, properly saying, have any autonomous intrinsic value. Objects or acts acquire a value, and in so doing become real, because they participate, after on fashion of another, in a reality that transcends them."[110]

While, for most of us who live in contemporary society, although the pattern of our daily life may be repeated, and there is a lack of change, the world we live in is continuously changing. We are living in a world which as Jean Baudrillard says: "…now many generations of objects will follow upon one another at an ever-accelerating pace during a single human lifetime."[111] ---- In the world, every day, there are news happenings. The media tirelessly keep sending us the latest news; and we have to keep updating our knowledge to catch up with the trend of fashion, learning to adjust to the new technology and social environments. Sometimes we also change our work or our school, move from one place to another place, travel around and see different landscapes with different people coming and going in our lives.

And even our daily study or work, though it is usually repeated, it is not unchangeable. For example, a student is studying at the high middle school now, while in the next year, he or she may go to the University, which means although he or she is still a student, the pattern of his or her study can be changed; Or a company employee is working in one position, while next month he or she will work at another position, which means the pattern of his or her work can also be changed.

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[110] Eliade, Mircea (1959). The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History. New York. P3-P4
[111] Baudrillard, Jean (1996). The System of Objects. New York. P159

In this sense, although in a certain spectrum and for a period of time, things in our daily work or study are repeated before our eyes, while generally, the whole world we now live in is changing, and time is flowing irreversibly.

While, for the premodernism time, the case is dramatically different. The archaic man lived in a world in which "for centuries generations of people succeeded one another in an unchanging decor of objects which were longer-lived than they"[112] ---- In the world they lived, what was repeated before their eyes was not only daily work, but almost everything around them: the surroundings of where they lived, the people they met, the landscapes they saw, the starry sky they observed…almost everything around them was repeated day after day, month after month, year after year, and even generation after generation.

In other words, the things dominated by the repeated patterns was not only their daily work, but almost every aspects of their worlds, which included the important occasions of human life, such as "birth and old age", "sickness and death", "marriages and funerals"; or the natural phenomenon, such as "the movement of star", "the change of geographical landscape in the four seasons". As a consequence, for the archaic man, "The past is but a prefiguration of the future. No event is irreversible and transformation is final. In a certain sense, it is even possible to say that nothing new happens in the world…"[113] ---- there was nothing new happened before the archaic man's eyes; it was nothing more than the repetition of the existing patterns.

Consequently, "through this repetition, time is suspended, or at least its virulence is diminished…in the primitive's desire to have no 'memory', not to record time, and to content himself with tolerating it simply as a dimension of his existence, but without 'interiorizing' it, without transforming it into consciousness…"[114]

So, (back to the story we mentioned above) why the time of the tragedy had happened was modified from "forty years ago" in the authentic version to "long ago" in the mythical version?

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[112] Baudrillard, Jean (1996). The System of Objects. New York. P159
[113] Eliade, Mircea (1959). The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History. New York. P89-P90
[114] Eliade, Mircea (1959). The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History. New York. P90-P91

Most possibly, the answer of it lied in the archaic man's attitude to the time and what happened before their eyes ----- "Basically, if viewed in its proper perspective, the life of archaic man (a life reduced to the repetition of archetypal acts, that is , to categories and not to events, to the unceasing rehearsal of the same primordial myths), although it takes place in time, does not bear the burden of time, does not record time's irreversibility; in other words, completely ignores what is especially characteristic and decisive in a consciousness of time…. the Primitive lives in a continual present." [115]

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Now, the other question about the causation in respect to why the young suitor has fallen over a cliff. In the mythical version there is a clear cause: "the fairy, driven by jealousy, had flung him from a cliff"; while in the real story, there is no cause ---- it is only an accident: it "happened" , he "slipped", and then fallen over a cliff".

For us who live nowadays, a simple death by accident may be normal and acceptable, while for most of the archaic man, it was obviously unacceptable ---- they believed if something happened, there must be some external causes that made it happened.

For example, if someone is sneezing, an archaic saying in China is that, it must be because there is someone missing him or her, so that he or she is sneezing. When a Zulu sneezes, he will say, "I am now blessed. The Idhlozi (ancient spirit) is with me; it has come to me. Let me hasten and praise it, for it is it which causes me to sneeze!"[116] While "The Persians ascribe yawning, sneezing, etc., to demoniacal possession."[117]

Although the cause gave by the archaic man in different areas about sneezing were different, one thing was common, that is, these archaic man all contributed the behavior

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[115] Eliade, Mircea (1959). The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History. New York. P86
[116] Tylor, Edward Burnett (1903), Primitive Culture.Vol.1, London: John Murray, P88
[117] Tylor, Edward Burnett (1903), Primitive Culture.Vol.1, London: John Murray, P93

of sneezing to some external things (the other one's missing, or the blessing of god , or the blessings of the ancestors or the witch of the devils).

We can find a lot of similar examples in the books on anthropology. But why did the archaic people believe that given any thing happened, there should be some external causes that made it happened?

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To answer the question, let's imagine now a sunset scene in the fields, and suppose there are two ways for you to see the scene: see it with your own eyes; or see it through any given medium (for example, through a photograph). What will be the difference in viewing the scene through the two different ways?

Suppose you have the chance to view it with your own eyes, then what kind of scene will appear before your eyes? When you look at it with your own eyes, what appears in your vision firstly may be the shape and color of the sun ---- it is round and red with the shinning halo around it; and the colorful clouds which is moving slowly in the sky; and the mountains stretched below the sun. Meanwhile, you may feel the wind blowing on your face, together with the feeling of the temperature of the air…shift your sight to another angle, to the afterglow of the sunset, you may see a few birds flying back to their nest on the tree -- you even can heard the voice of them… or may be, still in the afterglow of the sunset; you see a farmer who has just finished his farming work on the farmland, he is on his way home… you can smell the aroma of grass in the field …

Here, time is flowing, it is flowing in the space ---- Time and space are integrated as a whole; And all the things in space-time are interconnected coherently and continuously in the space-time: When the sun goes down, the sky gets dark, the bird begins to go back to their nets, the farmer goes home; the clouds are changing colors with the change of the sun's color; the temperature of the air is also getting cooler as the sun sinks lower….

And you are not only seeing with eyes, but also hearing with your ears, smelling with your nose, and sensing with your skin – together with your eyes, the other senses of yours also participated in the act of you perceiving.

Then how about seeing the scene through any given medium (for example, through photograph)? Similarly, you can see the shape and color of the sun with the shinning halo around it, the colorful clouds in the sky, and the stretched mountains below the sun. While the differences are:

First, you will not see how the clouds in the sky are moving, how the color of the sun is changing – for the time in the photo is motionless, it has been already cut from the flowing of time.

Second, you will not see the flying bird, nor the farmer walking on the way home ---- for the sight of your vision is confined by the frame of the photograph, you have no chance to shift the vision of you sight to the things beyond the frame of the photograph.

Third, there is no possibility for you to hear, to touch, or to smell anything is the scene, you perceive the scene only with your eyes alone.

Here, the moment of time is cut like an object out of the flowing of time, and can be taken causally to any possible spaces (for example, the museum, the living-room, the photo album etc.) where it does not originally belong to – time and space is no longer be integrated nor coherent.

Of course, as a "busy" human living in contemporary society, you may have no time to see the sunset every day, or there are too many buildings around you, which keep your sight out from the scene of sunset. But to the persons who lived in ancient time or pre-industrialized society, the sunrise and sunset were the most often seen scenes ---- every morning, they saw the sunrise and started to work; and in the late afternoon, they saw the sunset and rested.

Day after day, year after year, from sunrise in the Eastern to sunset in the Western, and then from sunset in the Western to sunrise in the Eastern …thus, in the eyes of archaic people, the time and space are not only integrated, but also are cyclic ---- "for an archaic

person, the regeneration of time is continually effected ---- that is , within the interval of the "year" too…"[118]

In a word, the premodern society see the world with their own eyes, therefore, the world presented before their eyes have integrated, interconnected, coherent and continuous cyclic features.

While once the media act as an "extension" of the human's eyes, things change ---- for example, when we examine a photograph, the flowing of time is cut into a series of moments, and the space can also be cut into a series parts ---- although as we have mentioned before that different media may shape the act of our seeing in different ways, there is one thing common for all the media: once we see the world through the media, what presented before us will no longer be integrated, interconnected, coherent and continuous, cyclic. Or in other words, the world presented before us will no longer be complete.

So, why the archaic man believed that given any thing happened, there should be some external causes that made it happened? The answer lies in the basic features of the world presented before the premodern society's eyes ---- since in the world nothing was independent of others, how did things happened without any external causes?

Consequently, it became necessary for the premodern society to find an external cause for the occurrence of any given things, for " 'All sacred things must have their place' (Fletcher 2, p. 34)…if they were taken out of their place, even in though, the entire order of the universe would be destroyed."[119]

So, (back to the story we mentioned above) how can a young man fell over a cliff and die (was taken out of his place in the world) without any reason? ---- Obviously, it did not conform to the rules of the universe in the eyes of the archaic man. Contrarily, if a man falls over a cliff, there must be some cause that made it happen.

Therefore, the fact that the young man had fallen over the cliff by accident could not "satisfy" the villagers. Instead, they needed an explanation ---- an explanation that is in

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[118] Eliade, Mircea (1959). The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History. New York. P86
[119] Levi-Strauss, Claude (1966). The Savage Mind. London. P10

line with the basic features of the world through their eyes ---- "The jealous fairy" and "the murder of the young man" satisfied the villager's need of an explanation like this.

In this sense, "…the characteristic feature of mythical though…is that it builds up structured sets, not directly with other structured sets but by using the remains and debris of every event.. fossilized evidence of the history of an individual or a society…Mythical thought, that 'bricoleur', builds up structures by fitting together events, or rather the remains of events."[120]

As a conclusion: the world the archaic man lived in was a world with seldom changes. Things daily repeated themselves before their eyes ---- day after day, month after month, year after year, and even generation after generation, so that for the premodern society, what was important was not the specific moments or things repeated before their eyes, but the stable patterns manifested by these specific moments and things. And since archaic man saw the world with own eyes, the patterns they saw had the basic features of integrated, interconnectivity, coherency and continuousness, cyclicality.

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We humans not only "see", but also "create". What we created contributes to the "civilization" of humanity.

One of the important ways for human to "create" is "imitation"---- We have the instinct of imitating: When we are children, we imitate and learn the ways of the adults around us to speak and act; when we grow up, we have our own idols, we imitate and learn from them about how to dress, how to speak, and how to behave. In the same way, we "create" by imitating.

For example, by imitating the rolling of the stones, humans created the wheels; by imitating the function of mountain, human create the walls…

We may also imitate the actions of natural creatures, for example, when the famous ancient Chinese doctor Hua Tuo 华佗 created the W*uqinxi* 五禽戏 ("Five-Animal Exercises"), a set of Chinese medical Qigong (breathing exercises) in order to prevent

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[120] Levi-Strauss, Claude (1966). The Savage Mind. London. P21-P22

and cure illness and prolong life, what he imitated were the following five animals' movements: the tiger, the deer, the bear, the ape and the bird.

For premodern society, since what most important they saw were the patterns in the nature rather than the specific things, what they imitated mostly was not any given specific thing, but the patterns they saw in the nature.

For example, "为政以德，譬如北辰，居其所而众星共之。" ("He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn towards it."[121] What Confucius advocated here was an imitation from the natural pattern of Polaris with other stars.

And since everything in the archaic man' eyes were coherent, continuous, and interconnected, the different patterns they saw would inevitably be interconnected with each other too.

For example, there might be many different patterns presented before an archaic farmer: the pattern of his farming work, the pattern of the crop's growth, the pattern of the weather change, the pattern of the starts movement…etc., While the pattern of his farming work was inevitably interconnected with the pattern of the crop's growth; and the pattern of the crop's growth was related with the pattern of the weather change; and the pattern of the weather change was related with the pattern of the stars movement; while the pattern of the stars movement influenced the patter of his farming work….all these patterns presented before his eyes in the end inevitably were integrated as a whole ---- the working pattern of the cosmos.

As a consequence, if we observe carefully, the working pattern of the cosmos plays a fundamental role in the construction of the "civilization" in premodern society:

> "For the moment, what we wish to emphasized is the fact that the world which surrounds us, civilized by the hand of man, is accorded no validity beyond that which is due to the extraterrestrial prototype that served as its model. Man constructs according to an archetype. Not only do his city or his temple have celestial models; the same is true of

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[121] Confucius (2010),Translated by Legge, James, Luyu《论语》(The Analects of Confucius), Auckland, N.Z.: Floating Press, P11

the entire region that he inhabits, with the river that water it, the fields that give him his food, etc." [122]

Here we transfer the "prototype" as the working pattern of the cosmos, which is equivalent to the "idea" in the Platonic sense. To some extent, we even can say that basically the ancient culture is created by human's imitation of the working pattern of the cosmos in their eyes.

About this point, ancient Chinese culture could be a good example. Borrowing an image to describe ancient Chinese mainstream culture, I would like to describe it as a traditional Chinese spherical folding lamp. This kind of lamp (as it is shown below) consists of a number of pleats, and the overall appearance of the lamp is presented as a sphere. Each pair of pleats which are 180 degrees apart, constitute a round plane. Theoretically there can be numerous pleats, that is, there are numerous round planes. No matter how many round planes there are, all of these round planes always share a common center of the sphere.
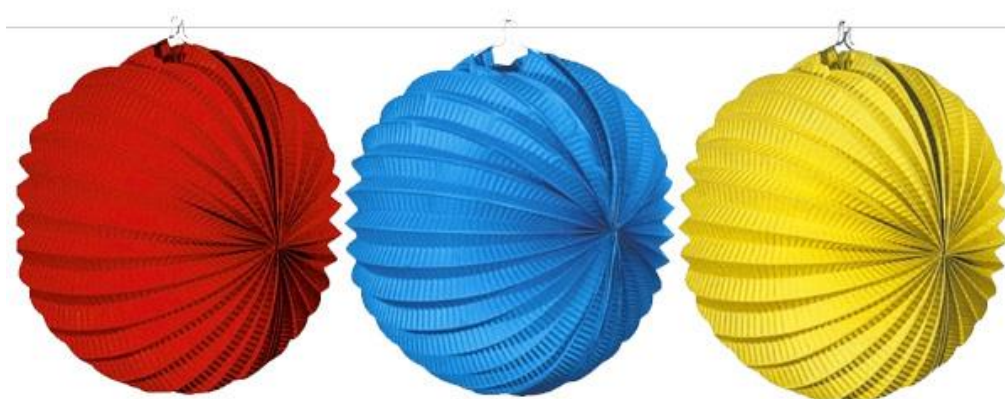
But what does it mean when we say that ancient Chinese culture system can be roughly looked as a sphere with numerous round planes that share a same center sphere? To let it easier understood, let us have a look of the picture below:

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[122] Eliade, Mircea (1959). The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History. New York. P10

This picture is a human's body. But it is not only a human's body, in Chinese medicine, the human's body is also a hologram of cosmos, which is shown in the picture above. Notice that the Zangfu 脏腑 (internal organs) in our body are regarded separately corresponding to the *Wu Xing* 五行(five Movements/five elements/Five stages).

The "*Wu Xing*" are mù 木 (Wood), huǒ 火 (Fire), tǔ 土 (Earth), jīn 金 (Metal), and shuǐ 水 (Water). In "*Shiji· Lishu*"《史记·历书》, It is written: "黄帝考定星历，建立五行", which told us in fact *Wu Xing* 五行 came from astrology, or in other words, it is the result of human's observing the cosmos.

In Chinese, *Xing* 行 means "moving", this can explain why *Wu Xing* is also called *Wu Yun* 五运 or *Wu yun zhi chi* 五运之气 , which refers to the five types of *Chi* (air) dominating at different times ---- as we know *Chi* is flowing ---- therefore, *Wu Xing* 五行 is primarily concerned with process and change, and represents the basic working pattern of cosmos: the pattern of the five basic movements of five 'seasons' (four seasons plus one) and five basic directions (east, south, west, north and middle) in the cosmos.

The interactions between the "five movements" based on the bidirectional circles: the "generative" cycle and the "conquering" cycle. Following the working pattern of cosmos, the interaction between *Zangfu* 脏腑(internal organs) in our body is also a bidirectional cyclic process.

Obviously, the idea of Chinese medicine concerning the human's body as above, is resulted from the imitation of the working pattern of "*Wu Xing*" (to metaphorical project the relation between "five movements" from the domain of external natural world to structure the relation between the internal organs in human's body).

Besides Chinese medicine, in fact, the ancient Chinese social structure and order, the ancient Chinese philosophy, the ancient Chinese architecture, the ancient Chinese music, the ancient Chinese painting, the Chinese martial arts ... almost every aspects of the ancient Chinese culture was mainly resulted from the imitation of the working law of the cosmos, and show the prominent features of integrated, interconnected, coherent and continuous, cyclic.

Take *Sangang Wuchang* 三纲五常 (the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues) , the core content in the Confucian ethics and the basic theory of social domination in China's feudal times as another example:

San Gang 三纲：君为臣纲，父为子纲，夫为妻纲

The three cardinal guides: ruler guides subject; father guides son; husband guides wife.

Wu Chang 五常：仁、义、礼、智、信

The five constant virtues: benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and credibility.

Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 in the Western Han Dynasty made the following explanation of "Sangang Wuchang""三纲五常"：

"君臣、父子、夫妇之义，皆取诸阴阳之道。君为阳，臣为阴；父为阳，子为阴；夫为阳，妻为阴。"（董仲舒，《春秋繁露•基义》）

"The monarch(ruler) and his subjects, father and son, the couple, their righteousness are all learned from the way of yin and yang. The monarch is yang, and his subjects are yin; father is yang, and his son is yin; Husband is yang, and his wife is yin."

"木配仁，火配智，土配信，金配义，水配礼。"（董仲舒，《举贤良对策》）

"Wood matches with benevolence, fire matches with wisdom, soil matches with credibility, gold matches with righteousness, water matches with propriety."

From the above explanation by Dong Zhongshu, we can see that the basic theory of social domination in China's feudal times, no matter the three cardinal guides or the five constant virtues, they both are the result of the imitation of basic working patterns of the cosmos perceived by the ancient Chinese.

We can also take ancient Chinese architecture as an example: "Not only in the great constructions of temples and palaces, but also in the domestic buildings scattered as farmsteads or collected in villages and towns, there was embodied throughout the ages a feeling for cosmic pattern and the symbolism of the directions, the seasons, the winds and constellations."[123]

In the book《四库全书总目提要·易类序》(*General catalogue of the Siku quanshu*), there is a word:"《易》之为书，推天道以明人事者也。" ("The purpose of the *Book of Changes* is to illustrate human affairs with the working law of cosmos"). Although "to illustrate human affairs with the working pattern of cosmos" here is related to the "*Book of Changes*", but it can also be regarded as a good summary for the features of traditional Chinese philosophy.

In a word, the traditional Chinese culture system can be roughly visualized as a "sphere" which consist of many round planes that share a same center of sphere, and the center of the sphere is no other than the working pattern of cosmos in the ancient Chinese's eyes.

Of course, besides the ancient Chinese culture, we can also found many similar examples in other cultures. In his famous article "*The Kabyle House or the World*

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[123] Needham, Joseph (1971). Science and Civilisation in China. Volume 4, London: The Cambridge University Press. P60-P61

Reversed", following a careful description and analysis of the spatial structure of the kabyle house, Pierre Bourdieu wrote: "The house, a microcosm organized by the same oppositions and homologies that order the whole universe, stands in a relation of homology to the rest of universe." Here, when the kabyle people organize their house, what they imitate is also the order of the cosmos in their eyes.

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When we talk about imitation, what we should note is that the premise of imitation is seeing. To illustrate this point, we might as well take the two separate different fictional accounts about the theme of Heaven in ancient China and ancient Europe as example:

In ancient China and the ancient Europe, around the conception of law in relation to the living world (theme of Heaven), there were two different fictions. In the fiction in the ancient Europe, there was a "divine legislator"(God) who was imaged as a 'Good Shepherd' leading "his flock into satisfying pastures"; While in ancient China, there was not a "divine legislator" in the story, it was a story about the harmonious cooperation between human beings and Nature.

About the reason why the two stories are different in such a way, Dr. Needham gives us a convincible analysis in his book "*Science and Civilisation in China*":

> "The shepherd and the cowherd beat their beasts, and take up an active attitude of command over their flocks and herds. God is imagined as a 'Good Shepherd' leading his flock into satisfying pastures…pastoral dominance over animals consorts well with legislation over things as well as men."[124]

While in "predominantly agricultural civilizations", for example, in ancient China, "when man has to do primarily with plants…the psychological conditions are quite different":

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[124] Needham, Joseph (1956). Science and Civilisation in China. Volume 2. London: The Cambridge University Press. P576

"…often the less he interferes with the growth of his crops the better. Until the harvest he does not touch them. They follow their Tao, which leads to his benefit."[125]

That is, the different fictions about Heaven separately in ancient China and ancient Europe, stemmed from the different circumstances in which the ancient Chinese and ancient European relied on. As Dr. Needham says: That contrasting attitude originate…from pastoral as opposed to agricultural life…"[126] Therefore, he further points out:

"Agricultural civilisations would therefore not be expected to show the dominance psychology and the notion of a divine legislator which is perhaps connected with it. If, indeed, this notion began in Babylonia, it was no doubt because the ancient economy of the fertile crescent was a mixed one, and certainly much of its spread was due to that pre-eminently pastoral people, the Hebrews."[127]

What and how we see decides what and how we imitate. To the ancient people, since what they see often and what they are familiar with most is the natural world, it means, the patterns/fashions they imitated most frequently came from the natural world. Since the natural world the ancient Chinese lived is different from what the people of "fertile crescent" lived in, some of the patterns they perceived from the natural world might also be different. Thus, their civilizations constructed upon the imitation from the patterns in the natural world are different.

Now what is the premodernism? Based on the above discussion, we define premodernism as a style of culture which was created based upon the patterns perceived by the archaic people with their own eyes in the premodernity world, which has the following characters:

1, It is a world with little change, therefore, the repeated patterns dominated almost every aspect of the peoples' lives.

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[125] Needham, Joseph (1956). Science and Civilisation in China. Volume 2. London: The Cambridge University Press. P576

[126] Needham, Joseph (1956). Science and Civilisation in China. Volume 2. London: The Cambridge University Press. P576

[127] Needham, Joseph (1956). Science and Civilisation in China. Volume 2. London: The Cambridge University Press. P577

2, People's daily lives had intimate relation with nature, so that the working patterns of nature (cosmos) presented before the archaic peoples' eyes became the main objects of their act of imitating, through which they created the premodernism culture.

3, People "saw" with their own eyes, so that the patterns in their eyes had the features of integration, interconnectivity, coherency and continuousness, cyclical and steadying. And the same with the premodernism culture which was created by imitating of these patterns.

4, Among all the patterns the most fundamental one was the working pattern of the cosmos, which normally played the key role in the creation and construction of the premodernism culture.

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Now, what is modernism? As another style of culture which different from premodernism, modernism arose in the wake of the Renaissance (from 14th to 16th century in Europe). While it is normally regarded that the time when modernism was shaped and began to flourish in the Western world was the late of 19th century.

As we know the Printing Revolution started by Johannes Gutenberg strongly contributed to the Renaissance, and therefore, the arising of modernism. Then what changes appeared in around the late 19th century that shaped Modernism?

As what we discussed above, if the culture of mankind is created and constructed based on what and how we saw, then around the late 19th century, the appearance of the following things in the Western world would be doomed to dramatically change the human culture:

1, The rapid growth of the railway. "The railroad, to its first astonished observers a modern miracle, created a spectacular means of transporting passengers and freight; between the late 1820s and the 1860s, it created a tightly woven network of rail lines across industrializing countries, and changed population patterns and commercial

opportunities forever." [128] The rapid development of the railway provides chances for more and more people to leave their hometown and go far away to see different landscapes, to meet different people, and to encounter different things…As a consequence, the world before peoples' eyes was no longer static.

2, The popularity of print media. Although print media had already spread in Europe since the art of Gutenberg printing appeared in the middle of 15th century, it was only until in the 19th century, the large-scale printing and distribution of print media (books, newspapers, magazines) was achieved.

3, The invention of photography. After the world's first heliograph was produced in 1822, photography soon became popular in Western world. The cameras extended the people's eyes ---- with the mechanical eyes of the cameras, people had the possibility to see time and space beyond when and where they lived in; Not only that, the camera also regulated people's vision ---- what people see and how they see were determined by the camera angle ----The world was therefore cut into a series of slices by the frame of a photo, which as Susan Sontag says:

> "The photograph is a thin slice of space as well as time. In a world ruled by photographic images, all borders ("framing") seem arbitrary. Anything can be separated, can be made discontinuous, from anything else: all that is necessary is to frame the subject differently.(Conversely, anything can be made adjacent to anything else.)"[129]

As a consequence, what was presented before people's eyes was no longer coherent, nor integral.

Railway, print media, and photography are the most important factors that shaped modernism. While to make full use of them, it would not be possible without the growth of cities ---- the large-scale industrial production and commercial activities in cities attracted inhabitants meaning larger populations, meanwhile this caused the invention and rapid growth of railway to become necessary; and only in the cities that were heavily populated, the large-scale printing and distribution of print media became

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[128] Gay, Peter (2008). Modernism: The Lure of Heresy, from Baudelaire to Beckett and Beyond. New York. London. P18

[129] Sontag Susan (1978). On Photography. UK: Allen Lane, P13

possible; meanwhile, the photo studios in the cities played an important role to promote photography's popularity. In this sense, "…modernism was mainly an urban phenomenon." [130]

The railway, print media and photograph, which were developed rapidly in the industrial cities in 19th century, had dramatically changed what and how people see, and therefore inevitably led to the following changes:

1, What people concerned about were inevitably changed.

For the people living in the premodern era, what matters were not the specific things which were repeated daily before their eyes, but the constant patterns behind the specific things; while now, almost all of the traditional patterns of living were being broken, everything was changing. To live no longer meant the endless repeating of constant patters, but more as a journey, along the way of which, there continuously were new landscapes that appeared.

Specific moments and things became precious and memorable, people began to pay attention to the specific moments and things happened before their eyes ---- just like what usually happens when we are traveling ---- paying attention carefully to everything new that appeared before our eyes and trying to remember every precious and memorable moment.

As a consequence, different from the traditional/academic artists, who "have dwelled on the distant past, and neglected 'particular beauty', the 'beauty of circumstances', for love of 'general beauty'"[131], the modernist, for example, Baudelaire, the beauty they championed was " 'the spectacle of fashionable life' of elegant carriages, smart grooms, nimble footmen, lovely women, and beautiful, well-turned-out children."[132] ---- the beauty which principally included "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent".[133]

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[130] Peter Gay (2008), Modernism: The Lure of Heresy, from Baudelaire to Beckett and Beyond，New York. London, P18

[131] Peter Gay (2008), Modernism: The Lure of Heresy, from Baudelaire to Beckett and Beyond，New York. London, P37

[132] Peter Gay (2008), Modernism: The Lure of Heresy, from Baudelaire to Beckett and Beyond，New York. London 2008, P37

[133] Peter Gay (2008), Modernism: The Lure of Heresy, from Baudelaire to Beckett and Beyond，New York. London P37

In this sense, it can be said: "It is on these grounds that the modernist period is often credited with the discovery or rediscovery of those real intensities of experience which had for so long been concealed……"[134]

2, What people imitated therefore were being changed.

The large amount of print media and photographic images constructed a simulate world, and separate humans from the natural world. "The premise of imitation is seeing", therefore, the objects that people imitated were no longer limited to the constant patterns that existed in the natural world, but mostly the changing artificial patterns/fashions that existed in the simulated world ---- especially in advertisements.

The pattern/fashion of a successful and charming man was established when a well-dressed man was posing by a private car ---- to be a successful and charming man, you should have a private car like this one; Or the pattern/fashion of being a charming woman was also thus established when a beautiful blonde girl was put together with a bottle of perfume ----to be a charming woman, you should use this kind of perfume…. The similar artificial patterns/fashions were ubiquitous in advertisements and films, and became the models of the act of imitating of people.

The ubiquitous artificial patterns/fashions in advertisements and films were constantly stimulating and encouraging commodity consumption and large-scale production; while the commodity consumption and large-scale production were constantly promoting the demand and creation of the artificial patterns/fashions in advertisements.

Thus, if we said the creation of the culture of premodernism was based upon patters/fashions in the natural world, then the modernism culture could be taken as a style of culture which was created basing upon the artificial patterns/fashions in the simulated world which was filled with artificial images ---- The artificial images played an important role in the culture of modernism. In this sense, as Susan Sontag wrote: "… a society becomes 'modern' when one of its chief activities is producing and consuming images, when images that have extraordinary powers to determine our demands upon

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[134] Steven Connor (1997), Postmodernism Culture: An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary, -2nd edition, London, P4

reality and are themselves coveted substitutes for firsthand experience become indispensable to the health of the economy, the stability of the polity, and the pursuit of private happiness." [135]

3, The way of seeing was also being changed.

To see the natural world with our own eye, the world presented before us is coherent, continuous, interconnected and indivisible. While being separated from the natural world by the simulated world filled with print media and photographic images, we can seldom see the natural world directly with our own eyes, but see it through the print media and photographic images. What is presented before our eyes were only the slices cut out of the whole and were put into the print media (books, newspapers) with linear or causal consistency.

To make all the slices presented before our eyes make sense, our mind had to follow the linear/causal order of the slices arranged in the print media, to string them together in the time line. As a consequence, the coherent, continuous, interconnected and indivisible relations between things in the premodernity era now were inevitably replaced by the causal link and linear relations between things.

In this sense, modernism culture represented a kind of rational spirit: logical classification and causal reasoning. Everything was asked to be classified and arranged well in a logical/causal or linear way. For example, the photos people took: "Through being photographed, something becomes part of a system of information, fitted into schemes of classification and storage which range from the crudely chronological order of snapshot sequences pasted in family albums to the dogged accumulations and meticulous filing needed for photography's uses in weather forecasting, astronomy, microbiology, geology, police work, medical training and diagnosis, military reconnaissance, and art history."[136]And even the development of a whole human society should follow a linear law and point to an ultimate goal.

The old patterns/fashions which once was taken as the models of the creation of human culture (human learned and imitated from these patters/fashions to create culture), now

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[135] Sontag Susan (1978). On Photography. UK: Allen Lane
[136] Sontag Susan (1978). On Photography. UK: Allen Lane

were being broken. And the culture created based on the imitation of these old patterns/ fashions therefore now received merciless negation and sneer: "The incomparable artist Honoré Daumier's ridiculing Homeric heroes, and the no less gifted composer Jacques Offenbach's lampoons of legendary Greek immortals like Helen of Troy or Ulysses were symptomatic of independent minds who were beginning to question, and hoping to subvert, the time-honored hierarchies of the arts."[137]

As I stated before that humans have an instinct to build relations between things, therefore, the fact that the old patterns/fashions (relations between things) in premodernity era were now being questioned and mistrusted, meant there must be some new relations between things had been built to replace the old ones, otherwise, the world humans lived in would fall into chaos.

And since the way people see the world was then in a linear way, the new relations being built were inevitably based upon the linear links in temporal dimension. As a consequence, the **meta-narrative** was shaped, a universal idea or story about the entire historical development of human society, which has the characteristics of linear (had a beginning and an end), unitarity (can be applied to a wide range of thoughts which includes Marxism, religious doctrines, belief in progress, universal reason, and others), and rational.

Another point we should not ignore was that in modernism, the print media were the so-called "mass media", which meant that the information media provided was mainly for the general public. Or in other words, the general public received information almost from the common media. That is, what and how the general public saw through the media were similar. Thus modernism also had strongly feature of oneness and centralization (meritocracy).

In conclusion, the modern era is an era in which dynamic replaced static; the media replaced the eyes of human. In the modern era, people seldom saw the world with their own eyes, instead, they saw the world more often through the media ---- the simulated world were filled with print media and photographic images replaced the natural world.

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[137] Peter Gay (2008), Modernism: The Lure of Heresy, from Baudelaire to Beckett and Beyond，New York. London, P37-P38

In the print media, the clips of the world were arranged in the linear order; arranging things in linear order means the act of seeing was happening in the temporal dimension. That is people need firstly to distinguish and separate what they see into segments, and then classify and string these segments into a chain, following the chronological orders. As a consequence, modernism, as a style of culture, which was created based on a simulated world in a linear order, was manifested with the features of segmentation/classification and linearity/causality. Meanwhile, **meta-narrative** replaced the working pattern of the cosmos (the center of the premodernism culture) and became the center of the modernism culture.

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Then, what is postmodernism? Same as the modernity era, in the postmodernity era, most often, humans see the world through media. Therefore, the artificial patterns/fashions which were ubiquitous in media are the objects of the imitation of human too. In this sense, postmodernism somehow can be regarded as the extension of Modernism.

While postmodernism can be different from modernism. From the perspective of the act of seeing, the differences still lie in the changes on what we see and how we see in the postmodern era.

In modern era, since the one-sided communication characters of the mass media, the main body of which was print media, the audiences at that time mostly were the receivers of the information arranged by the media. That is, for most of the people at that time, everything presented before their eyes through media was chosen and arranged meticulously in advance by the mass media. In other word, in modern era, the simulate world (constructed by media) presented before the people was an organized and orderly world.

And due to the linear character of print media, the way the simulate world (constructed mainly by print media) was arranged to the linear and logic orders. As a consequence, in the modern era, the simulate world (constructed by media) presented before people

was not only an organized and orderly world, but an organized and orderly world with linear, logic and rational features.

While in the postmodern era, when the new electric media (television, video tape) and internet successively began to get popular and greatly enriched the people's vision, the arranged way of the world presented before people no longer is restricted in the linear and logic order.

On the TV screen, the inserted advertisements and the content switched frequently between different channels broke the borders between different space-time. In a casual way, different clips cut from different space-time might be linked together without any logical or causal relations.

Video tape made it further ---- play, fast-forward, reverse, stop, and eject…with the buttons on the video tape, not only the borders between different space-time was broken, but also the linear time in the same space-time was broken ---- time is no longer irreversible, the time itself became a device which can be arranged casually.

If we say that television broke the borders between different space-time, video tape made the linear time in the same space-time broken, then obviously, the internet can be viewed as the combination of the two. It went further in changing the arrangement of the clips of the world from both the temporal and spatial dimension. And as a medium, one of the prominent features of the internet, is its "bidirectional communications", which means for the first time in human history, theoretically, as long as he or she has a device to access the internet, every individual has the opportunity to send information to others conveniently and publicly ---- but this time, generally, no one will have the responsible to meticulously arrange these individual information as a whole ---- the information are just "piled up" or "laid" casually in cyber space.

As a consequence, it seemed that we suddenly enter into a diversified, as well as a disorderly and grotesque world. The organized and orderly world with linear, logic and rational features in the modern era are now being broken, and therefore, the **meta-narrative** created basing itself upon the rules of linearity, logicality and rationality is inevitably being questioned. In this sense, the most prominent feature of postmodernism is as Jean-Francois Lyotard summarized in his work *The Postmodern*

Condition: A Report on Knowledge (1984): "…**incredulity towards metanarratives.**"[138]

4.2   The Form designs of Typical Postmodernism Narrative

Corresponding to the postmodern world presented before the people, what will be the typical postmodernism ways of narrative? Can *wulitou* be regarded as a typical postmodernism way of narrative?

When we recall the sights of somewhere that is very familiar to us ---- for example the hometown of us we lived in during our childhood ---- the first thing that appears in our mind is normally not the geographical map of it, but some specific places which established an impression on our memories ---- for example, the loft of our home, the garden we often played in, the convenient store where we often bought snacks, the kindergarten or school we once went to, or the bus station on the way to school etc.

And, what came to our mind together with these places, are also the things, the people, or the events that once occurred or happened in these places. For example, our favorite toys in the loft, the childhood games we once played often in the garden, the snacks we loved to buy at that convenient store; our classmates in the kindergarten or school, some impressive dialogues with our parents at the bus station…What does it mean? It shows, when we experience and learn the physical world with our own eyes, the specific things or actions we saw are always associated with some specific places where they occur or happen in the physical world. That is, as the English term "take place" indicates: "to be" means " to take a place". (Conversely, when we see something through the media, for example, to see a tree through photography, since we may see the photo of the tree at different places, the tree in our mind might not necessarily be associated with any specific place).

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[138] Jean-Francois Lyotard (1984), The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, Minneapolis, Pxxiv

Now back to the premodern world, as we have stated hereinbefore that, the premodern world was consisted of patterns, which were constructed with repeated things and actions, and were learned by people with their own eyes. It means, mostly, to any given pattern in the premodern world, there was a (or some) place(s) associated with it. For example, the famer's working pattern was associated with the farming filed; the pattern of the moving of stars was associated with the sky, etc.

And as a world of "total field" with the integrated and interconnected features, in premodern world, all these patterns inevitably were interconnected together in unity, and therefore this happened to all the places associated with these patterns.

Patterns means actions happened repeatedly, and action relies on the temporal orders, or in other words, the dimension of time; while places indicate to the dimension of space. That is, the patterns in premodern world were integrated as a whole in both the temporal dimension and spatial dimension ---- **the temporal dimension and spatial dimension kept a kind of subtle balance as regards to the ratio of the people's perception in premodern world.**

Then, how about the modern world and the postmodern world? Does the temporal dimension and spatial dimension in the two world also kept a kind of subtle balance as regards the ratio of the people's perception? Or did there exist any bias of spatial-temporal dimension?

To make it easier to analyze, we might as well image the modern world as a long journey by train, along which there were continuous various views that appeared before the eyes of the passengers (the people living in the modern world). While no matter how fresh or how attractive the views may seem to the passengers, as the train kept moving forward, each view would inevitably be left behind and turned into a point along the route of the journey. And the individual views appeared according to the chronological sequence (linear order) along the journey were arranged and connected as a linear route, which had the beginning with a starting point, and aimed to some terminal point.

Here, the views appeared along the journey metaphorize the simulate scenes and events chosen and arranged meticulously by media ---- By arranging these scenes and events into the daily news or week news in chronological orders, the media defined the possibilities of what might be seen along the journey, meanwhile, shaping the habit of seeing from the vision of temporal orders, or in other word, the habit of seeing in the temporal dimension.

And the linear route abstracted from the arrangement of all the spots appeared along the journey, therefore developed into the meta-narrative. While, as the possible choices of the scenes available along the journey could be different for different people. For example, some people might choose to see the views through the windows of the right side of the train all the time; while some might choose to see through the window of the left side all the time; or some might choose to shift their vision constantly between the right side and the left side; or some might choose to doze on the train, and ignore the landscapes outside of the train for a while….As a result, the meta-narratives in different people's eyes might different. While, no matter how different these meta-narratives might be, they are all shaped basing upon the linear/temporal order.

Briefly, in modern world, the perception of people relied heavily on the act of seeing in the temporal dimension.

If we image the modern world as a long linear journey with a starting point aimed to some terminal. Then, for the people who just enter into the postmodern world, at the beginning, living in the postmodern world is just like an adventure in a huge (or boundless) and magic maze-like world.

From the moment when you step in the maze-like world on, everything presented before you is very fresh and different. You eagerly observe what is presented before you with great curiosity ---- Left and right, up and down, front and back, near and far, you turn your head continuously to change your visual angles, and each visual angle brings a different picture before your eyes: the fountain square, a bus station, an old street, the small shops along the street, a girl walking her dog along the street…Lots of different pictures pour into your eyes.

And meanwhile, instinctively, just like playing a puzzle game, all these pictures are expected to be put together in your mind automatically in the spatial orders between them, for example: On the left side of the fountain square, there is a bus station, opposite to the bus station, there is an old street, along which there are many small shops, a girl walking her dog along the street…

Difference is that in the puzzle game, the different pictures of the puzzle are expected to be put together as a unity, while the magic maze-like world is so huge, and the optional ways before you are so diverse and confusing that it seems impossible for you to get the whole image of it: You keep on walking in the world, while been without clear direction and destination; You saw many different views, but you failed to find the rules or ways to arrange these pictures as a whole ---- the world is fragmentary and decentralist.

And although you pass by many different places, normally you seldom stay at any of them for a long time, so there are seldom things appear before you repeatedly, and therefore, you have no time to find the possible temporal order underneath the pictures on the surface by repeatedly observation ---- Temporal orders do not play important role here. Rather, **in the postmodernism world, what presented before you, at the beginning, is mainly base upon your act of seeing in spatial dimension.**

So, the so-called postmodernism usually refers to the culture trend based upon the act of seeing when people entered in the postmodern world ---- the act of seeing which relied heavily on spatial dimension.

In short, premodernism was based upon the act of seeing in which the temporal dimension and spatial dimension kept a kind of subtle balance; modernism based upon the act of seeing which relied heavily on temporal dimension; while postmodernism based upon the act of seeing which relied heavily on spatial dimension.

Hence, to shift from the modern world into the postmodern world and adapt to the new environment in the postmodern world, at the beginning, it means what needs to be done firstly is to conquer the habit of seeing in the temporal dimension which is deeply shaped by the modern world ---- Especially for the people who were influenced deeply

by the highly modernized world (for example, the highly modernized countries in Europe).

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In an interview with a reporter from China's Xinhua News Agency, Ms. Tuula Haavisto, the Director of the Helsinki City Library of Finland, said: "Europe is the continent of reading. Without reading , there would be no the advanced civilization in Europe of today."[139] That is true, Reading is a time-honoured fashion in Europe:

> "Reading habits are notoriously hard to gauge; statistics are scarce and resist interpretation but it seems evident that such a public was being formed in the Age of Enlightenment. Calvinist states like Geneva and the Dutch Republic were avid for learning, and England, with its vigorous Puritan strain, already had developed a substantial reading public in the seventeenth century. In these countries the habit of reading took hold of wider and wider circles in the time of Hume and Voltaire. When Samuel Johnson, in 1781, called the English "a nation of readers", his exaggeration was pardonable because it was moderate; a year later, the Swiss traveler Carl Philipp Moritz, a great Anglo-maniac, was pleased to note that the English classics were being republished in numerous and inexpensive editions read by everyone; his landlady, a tailor's window, read Milton, and read him, it seemed to Moritz, with proper understanding."[140]

According to the above materials provided by Peter Gay in his book "*Enlightenment*", from the 17th century till now, reading as a habit has been being popular in Europe around 300 years ---- even nowadays, when the print media is being challenged strongly by internet, at the cafés, in the parks, on the subways, at the airports, in the buses…. almost every public areas in Europe, one can always see people reading.

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[139] Li Jizhi 李骥志, "The love between Europeans and libraries for a thousand years"《欧洲人与图书馆的千年之恋》，Xinhua News Agency, From http://www.xinhuanet.com/2018-04/22/c_1122722732.htm
[140] Peter Gay, The Enlightenment: An Interpretation. Volume II: The Science of Freedom, New York 1969, P58

The popularity of reading is shaped by the highly modernized societies in Europe. And the cognitive habits (classification, linear, logic) and spirits (rationality, self-independence, self-discipline) developed with the act of reading, have also been deeply rooted in the daily life of Europeans thereafter. About this point, we can find many examples in the Europeans' daily life. For example, most of the modern Europeans have developed the habit of making a daily schedule, through which daily life is fully arranged with a temporal sequence of actions in advance.

The act of reading brought the European cognitive habit of classification, linear, logic; and the spirits of rationality, self-independence, self-discipline ---- all these constituted together the cornerstone of modern science and democracy. In this sense, "reading" made great contributions to the modern science and democracy ---- the brilliant achievements of mankind in the modern era.

From the perspective of the spatial-temporal dimension of seeing, "classification, linear, logic" means to "see" in the temporal dimension ---- What presented before eyes are classified and strung together in the timeline sequentially ----Time decides the arrangement of things and the relations between things. In this sense, when the postmodern era brings its non-linear, fragmented views appeared with it in Europe, for most of the Europeans, who get used to reading and are particularly sensitive to "time", it is natural to instinctively notice the change of the conception of time in the postmodern world, and be attracted by the theme of time ---- **The same is true for anyone lives elsewhere other than Europe, who is similarly influenced deeply by the advanced modernized world.**

To develop the new way of seeing to adapt to the postmodern world, it always needs firstly to deconstruct the old ones firstly. Consequently, no wonder we notice the typical postmodernism narratives paying special attention on the theme of time, which is manifested mainly by the narrative structure ---- by deconstructing the chronological sequence of the narrative, the typical postmodernists aimed to express their critical idea on time, and reconstruct new conceptions of time in their narratives by the reflection and deconstruction of the old way of seeing which relied heavily on temporal dimension.

And the form designs used often in the postmodernism narrative are: **Multiple protagonists; Nonlinear time**; **Inconsistent reality; Coincidence**. To borrow the conceptions made by Robert McKee in his book "*Story*", the meaning of the above form designs are separately as below:

> MULTIPLE PROTAGONISTS: "…if the writer splinters the film into a number of relatively small, subplot-sized stories, each with a separate protagonist, the result minimizes the roller-coaster dynamic of the Multiplot variation of Miniplot that's grown in popularity since the 1980s. "

> "A story that either skips helter-skelter through time or so blurs temporal continuity that the audience cannot sort out what happens before and after what is told in NONLINEAR TIME"

> "INCONSISTENT REALITIES are settings that mix modes of interaction so that the story's episodes jump inconsistently from one "reality" to another create a sense of absurdity."

> "COINCIDENCE drives a fictional world in which unmotivated actions trigger events that do not cause further effects, and therefore fragment the story into divergent episodes and an opening ending, expressing the disconnectedness of existence."[141]

Here, we take the film "*Run Lola Run*" (Germany, 1998) and "*Chongqing Senlin*" "重庆森林" ("*Chungking Express*") (Hongkong China, 1994) as examples to illustrate the points above.

In the film "*Run Lola Run*" , the image of a big clock (see the picture below) and the sound of clock ticking shown at the beginning indicate it is a story about the **theme of time**.

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[141]   Robert McKee, Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting, New York 1997, P51-P54
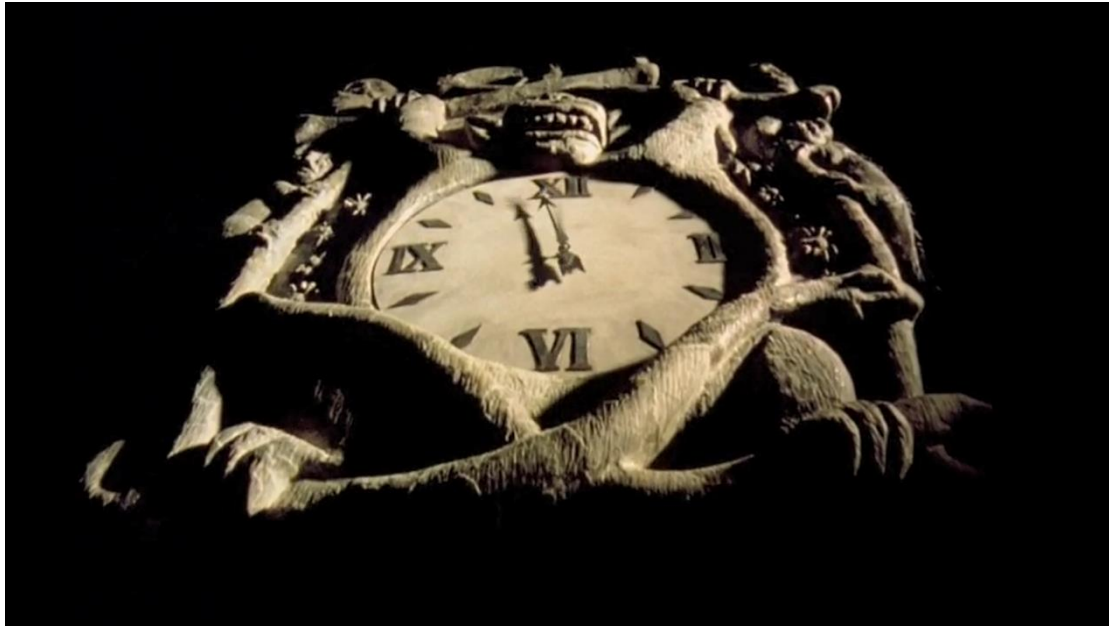
The image of a big clock appeared at the beginning of "*Run Lola Run*" (Germany, 1998)

Through the use of the typical postmodernism form designs we mentioned above (Nonlinear time; Inconsistent reality and Coincidence), the story in this film displayed three times of Lola's running along the path, but there is a slight difference in each run, which causes the significant change in the final outcome.

The repetition of Lola's run suggests the journey of life does not only exist with the inevitability of time, but also with the occasionality of time ---- a slight moment and decision (or action) in time may decide a final outcome or the possibilities of fate ----- just like what we are facing often in the maze-like postmodern world: there are usually multiple possibilities before us, any occasional moment of time may lead to different views and different results.

Same with the film "*Run Lola Run*", **"time"** also played an important role in Wang Jiawei 王家卫's movie "*Chongqing Senlin*" "重庆森林" ("*Chungking Express*") (Hongkong China, 1994). The theme of time in this film not only was hinted at by clocks appearing often, but also manifested through the actor's monologues or dialogues mixed with the conceptions of time. For example, one of the protagonists in this film, He Zhiwu 何志武, his famous monologues when he passed by two woman separately and consequently:
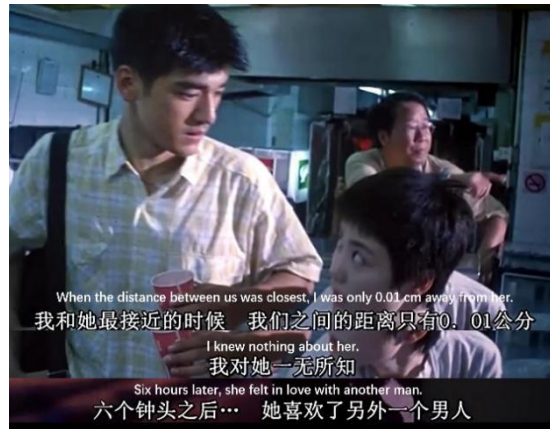
The actor's monologues in "*Chungking Express*" (Hongkong China, 1994)

"When we the distance between us was closest, I was only 0.01 cm away from her. After 57 hours, I fell in love with this woman."

"When the distance between us was closest, I was only 0.01 cm from her. I knew nothing about her. Six hours later, she felt in love with another man."

Also through the use of the typical postmodernism form designs of Multiple protagonists, Nonlinear time and Coincidence, the film presented a series of fragmented events before our eyes, and showed the random collision of things, which also like what we are seeing often in the maze-like postmodern world: The uncertain routes make everything presented before us become fragmented ---- the chains of temporal order are broken ----- no one knows who he or she will meet and what will happened at the next corner of the route.

With the typical postmodernism form designs, the other well know postmodernism movies such as "*Pulp Fiction*" (USA, 1995) "*Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*" (England, 1998), "*The Matrix*" (USA, 1999)…and so on, these stories also aimed to portray the multiple conception of time and the fortuitous coincidence fragmentation in the postmodern world ---- by articulate "a sense of time as divisible and subject to manipulation"[142], these movies reflect the rethink of "the human experience of time in

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[142] Cameron, Allan (2008), Modular Narratives in Contemporary Cinema, New York: Palgrave Macmillan. P1

relation to science, technology and social and industrial organization"[143], they are "our own 'tales about time'"[144].

4.3 *Wulitou* Narrative and Typical Postmodernism Style Narrative

Now back to the question: Can *wulitou* be regarded as a typical postmodernism way of narrative? Or, is *wulitou* can be taken as an example of using postmodernism narrative form designs?

As we have stated *wulitou* is characterized by deliberately combining or distorting "somethings or some phenomenon which have no connection by some unintelligible way to reach the effect of humor or satire", therefore, same with the typical postmodernism narratives, *wulitou* has the features of illogicality and disorder and fragmentation.

While by observing it carefully, we can find that *wulitou* narrative still different from the typical postmodernism narratives. And what made them different is none other than the form designs.

Multiple protagonists, Nonlinear time, Inconsistent reality, Coincidence ---- these are the form designs used often in postmodernism narratives. And through the use of these form designs, it may make the links between the different scenes/events of a story look kind of illogical and disorderly, and lead to fragmentation, and even meaninglessness and absurdity.

While what should be noticed is that all the form designs used by postmodern narratives always are operated in the temporal dimension. Or in other words, the form designs mainly manifested through the operation in the temporal dimension.

To make it easy to understand, we might as well imagine the process of creating a typical postmodernism narrative as a process of making a colorful pearl necklace: all the scenes/events separated like the pearls (with different colors) "cut" out of the

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[143] Cameron, Allan (2008), Modular Narratives in Contemporary Cinema, New York: Palgrave Macmillan. P2
[144] Cameron, Allan (2008), Modular Narratives in Contemporary Cinema, New York: Palgrave Macmillan. P2

background/context they originally belong to, only to be strung together. While different from the way to create a classical narrative, in which all the scenes/events (the pearls with different colors) are strung together in the time line (the chain of the necklace) as (for example) A-B-C-D-E, the scenes/events in the postmodernism narratives may be strung together in a different way, for example, C-B-E-D-A, or B-C-A-D-E, or even sometimes, they are strung separately in the double layer or multilayer of the chains of the necklace, and therefore presented as (for example) A-D and B-E-C….Since the colors of the pearls (scenes/events) are different, the different sequences they are strung in the chain will make the appearance of the necklace different. While, no matter how the scenes/events (the pearls) are strung together in the postmodernism narratives (the necklace), the operation is always happening in the temporal dimension (the chain of the necklace).

While to create a *wulitou* narrative is like to make a mosaic crystal necklace. What matters is not how to string the mosaic crystal pendants in the necklace chain, but firstly is how to set the crystal particles in each pendant as a mosaic image ---- here we take the mosaic crystal pendants to metaphorize the scenes/events ---- it is no doubt that if we string these crystal pendants in the necklace chain in different ways, it may make the appearance of the necklace different. While for the creators of the *wulitou* narratives, it seems what they care most about normally not how to make the arrangement of the crystal pendants in the necklace chain look special or unique, but how to piece the crystal particles together on each pendant of the necklace to make an attractive mosaic image. That is, to create a *wulitou* story, the operation is mainly happening in the spatial dimension (the mosaic image in the pendants)

To illustrate this point, let's go back to the episode 1 of the second season of "*Wanwan Mei Xiangdao*"《万万没想到》 ("*Unexpectedness*"), which we have taken it as an example in the Chapter 2. And to make it convenient to read, we list the 9 sections (scenes/events) of the story in this episode again:

C. The opening credits and advertisements

1. Monkey King assails the five-finger mountain (Wang Dachui) how long in hell he will be trapped under the mountain.

2. (flashback) The Jade Emperor asks the Lord Buddha to help him suppress Monkey King.

3. (flashback) The Monkey king slaps the faces of the commanders who came from the heaven.

4. (flashback) Lord Buddha turns his left hand (Wang Dachui) into a five-finger mountain, and traps Monkey king under the mountain.

5. 500 years later, the Monkey king is still being trapped under the mountain.

6. Lord Buddha tells Wang Dachui to find someone to take Monkey King to the Western Heaven to fetch the Buddhist scripture.

7. Wang Dachui tries all his best to persuade Tang Monk take Monkey King with him to go to the Western Heaven to fetch the Buddhist scripture.

8. Tang Monk agrees to take Monkey King with him to go to the Western Heaven to fetch the Buddhist scripture, and releases Monkey King out from the five-finger mountain

9. Wang Dachui is turned into the restrictive golden hoop on Monkey King's head by Lord Buddha.

E. The ending credits.

In this episode, as we have mentioned before, the narrative style of it seems kind of illogical and weird, while what makes it looks illogical and weird, is mainly not the way of the links between it's different scenes/events (the arrangement of the crystal pendants in the necklace chain) ---- in fact, if we see it from the whole narrative structure, it is in accordance with the traditional convention of narrative ---- it has a beginning, the development, and an end. Only that in the beginning of the story, it adopts the method of flashback to state the background, the key characters and the cause of the story.

What makes the narrative be presented as *wulitou* style, is none other than the illogical and strange contents collaged together in an unintelligible way in each scene. For example, in the scene 7 of this episode, Tang monk of China's Tang Dynasty appearing

together with a modern cigarette in his left hand is a typical *wulitou* style scene ---- by the means of "anachronism", to intendedly misplace a modern cigarette in the scene.

The same is true with almost all the *wulitou* narratives we have mentioned hereinbefore. Only there is one worth mentioning ---- the film 《大话西游》 ("*A Chinese Odyssey*") (1995). It is easy to find that the film also adopted the typical postmodernism form design (Nonlinear time and Inconsistent reality) which is manifested by the protagonist's several time's time-travelling in different space-time. However, the reason that it is respected as the classical and representative narrative of "*wulitou*", is not because its adoption of typical postmodernism form design (the postmodernism style ways to link the different scenes/events of the story), but is the illogical content inside the scenes and events.

While of course, since its use of postmodernism form designs of Nonlinear time and Inconsistent reality, in China, 《大话西游》 ("*A Chinese Odyssey*") (1994) can also be classified into the postmodernism film ---- it's a special film with both the features of *wulitou* narrative and postmodernism narrative.

To string the pearls (scenes or events) together in the chain of necklace is an operation happened in the temporal dimension, while to piece the crystal particles together on each pendant of the necklace to make an attractive mosaic image is an operation happened in the spatial dimension.

In this sense, we don't take *wulitou* as an example of using postmodernism narrative form designs. The popularity of *wulitou* was shaped by the special cultural context in China in the period from the end of 1990s to the mid-2010s.

4.4   The Cultural Context in China Around the End of 1990s

Chinese modern history began from 1840. Till 1949 when the People's Republic of China was founded, there were twice important modernization movements in the modern history of China.

The first one is the Westernization Movement (1861-1894). It lasted in China for around 30 years, while it was interrupted by the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), between China's (Qing Dynasty) and Japan's (Empire of Japan).

The second one is the New Culture Movement (1915-1923). It lasted in China for around 10 years, while it was interrupted by the successive wars afterwards: the First Revolutionary Civil War (1924-1927); the Civil War (1927-1937), between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China; The Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), between China's (Republic of China) and Japan's (Empire of Japan), from 1941 on as part of World War II; the War of Liberation (1945-1949), between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China.

That is, from the mid of 19th century to the mid of the 20th century, in the time of around one century, although there were the above two modernization movements in China, due to the repeated interruptions of war and civil disturbance. The modernization in China did not go smoothly.

Only until 1949 when the People's Republic of China was founded, was modernization relaunched in China. During this time because of a series of political and economic problems, the road China took to become a modernized country was at first also not smooth.

As a consequence, in 1977, the year when the ten years' culture revolution (1966-1976) in China was ended, the Chinese population in the countryside still was heavily populated ---- according to the data released by the national bureau of statistics of China, in 1977, China has a population of 9.497 hundred million of which the country side has a rural population of 7.830 hundred million, the proportion of the rural population is 82.45%.

That is, in the1970s most of the Chinese still made a living by traditional farming. And because of the lack of media in countryside, what and how people saw at that time still had heavy premodernism color ---- a vivid example is my mother's grandmother:

According to my mother's memory, her grandmother can predict the next day's weather correctly by observing the clouds in the sky and the direction of winds; which means

the world in her eyes had very typical premodern features of integrated, interconnected, coherent and cyclic.

Another example my mother told me about her grandmother was that once because my mother's little brother (my uncle) had a serious fever, my mother's grandmother walked to the farmland where the kid got sick and then walked back home along the path while shouting his name out, for according to the archaic saying, she believed my uncle must be frightened by some ghost so heavily that some of his souls was out of his body and got lost (according to the Chinese ancient soul dualism tradition, every living human has three **Hun** 魂 (yang souls) and seven **Po** 魄 (yin souls), and that was why my uncle had a serious fever. Hence, she shouted my uncle's name out repeatedly just in order to call his lost soul and bring it back home. Luckily my uncle got recovered later. We don't know whether the behavior of my mother's grandmother did had some psychological effect on my uncle, but what we are sure was that my mother's grandmother's behavior was a typical style of premodernism.

My mother's grandmother died in 1980s in her 80s. She was just one of the several hundred million farmers lived in the 20th century in China, and presented a typical Chinese farmer's way of seeing the world before the year of 1977.

In 1977 after the Culture Revolution in China, China finally entered into a rapid modernization period, and a series of modernization policies were established and implemented successively in China at that time: in 1977, the Chinese national college entrance examination which was suspended for almost 10 year because of the Culture Revolution was restored; in 1978, the Chinese Reform and Opening-up policy was started by Chairman Deng Xiaopin 邓小平.

And then, only no more than 5 years later, according to data of the third census figure in 1982 and the second one in 1964, which were released by the National Bureau of Statistics of China: in 1982, the population who received college education have already reached 6.20 million, which is that 2.14 times of the population received college education in 1964 (the year before the culture revolution), the number of which is 2.89 million.

Still according to the second census figure in 1964 and the third census figure in 1982, the proportion of illiteracy in the population was reduced from 33.6% in 1964 to 22.8% in 1984; The urban resident population increased from 127.10 million in 1964 to 210.82 million in 1982.

What was developed with rapid modernization was the blooming of the modern culture in China. From the 1980s to 1990, it was a period that reached a height in modern poems and modern novels, meanwhile, the fifth generation of Chinese film directors represented by Zhang Yimou 张艺谋 and Chen Kaige 陈凯歌 also showed their talent during this time, and produced many excellent modernism films, such as "*Huang Tudi*" "黄土地" ("*The Yellow Soil*") (1985), "*Lao Jin*" "老井" ("*Old Well*") (1986), "*Hong Gaoliang*" "红高粱"("*Red Sorghum*") (1987), "*Dahong Denglong Gaogao Gua*" "大红灯笼高高挂" ("*Raise the Red Lantern*") (1992), "*Bawang Bie Ji*" "霸王别姬" ("*Farewell My Concubine*") (1993) and so on.

While at almost the same time, another style of culture ---- postmodernism also appeared and gradually got popular in China. In the mid of 1980s, the television, radio and tap players began to enter in the average Chinese families; and then in the 1990s, video recorder, video game and Internet got popular in China successively. The popularity of these new media announced the coming of Postmodernism in China.

From the mid of 1980s on, Break Dance, Hippie fashion, Rock and Roll…the western postmodern cultures quickly "sneaked" into China, and became the fashion sought after by the urban Chinese young generation in 1980s-1990s. And almost at the same time, Chinese native postmodern culture was also beginning to sprout. From the latter half of 1980s to the 1990s, a group of Chinese postmodern pioneers during this time appeared and got famous in China, among them, there were: the postmodern rock star Cui Jian 崔健; the postmodern novelists Wang Xiaobo 王小波 and Wang Shuo 王朔; The sixth generation of Chinese film directors represented by Jiang Wen 姜文, Wang Xiaoshuai 王小帅, Jia Zhangke 贾樟柯 and etc..

But what we should emphasize here is even during the time of the 1990s, when both modernism and postmodernism were blooming in China, the premodernism that had a long history in China and had already penetrated deeply in Chinese daily life and every

aspects of Chinese society, still had a strong influence on the Chinese cognitive habit of that time.

A simple example: before the end of 1990s, it was easy for any foreigner who lived in China to find the importance of the two terms "*guanxi*"关系 (relations) and "*mianzi*" 面子 (face) in China ---- in the social life of China before the end of 1990s, you should be aware the relations between people and be careful not to hurt other's "face", for everyone in the Chinese society has their own place, and all his behavior should be compatible with his position/place in the society, and correspondingly, he should receive the corresponding respect from others, otherwise it would make him feel a loss of "face" (be offended) ---- similar to the idea of " 'All sacred things must have their place' (Fletcher 2, p. 34)…if they were taken out of their place, even in though, the entire order of the universe would be destroyed"[145], it is a typical idea of premodernism which take the whole social word as an "unified field".

That is, from the mid of 1980s on, a new and complex cultural context had gradually taken shape in China: the premodernism with a long history in China; together with modernism which was rapidly developing while it did not yet finish its task to subvert the premodernism; and the new coming postmodernism ---- The three ones were mixed together and constructed the special cultural context of China around the end of 1990s.

In other word, the culture context in around the end of 1990s, when *wulitou* as a story style became popular in China, was a special mixture of the historic premodernism, the unfinished modernization and the new postmodernism.

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As we have stated that for most of the people living in highly modernized countries (for example, in Europe), from the modern world entering into the postmodern world, what challenged them most was the change of the dominant way of seeing ---- People have to get used to the way of seeing in the spatial dimension in the postmodern world. In

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[145] Claude Levi-Strauss (1966), The Savage Mind, London, P10

this case, the deep-rooted habit of seeing in the temporal dimension therefore became a big barricade to them. Thus, to adopt the new environment in postmodernism, what they needed to do firstly was changing their way of seeing from the temporal dimension to the spatial dimension, which manifested in the narrative is the replacement of the linear narrative structure by the postmodernism form designs.

While things seem much more complex in China. For the special cultural context which was mixed with historic premodernism, the unfinished modernization and the new postmodernism, approximately at the end of 1990s, the Chinese can be classified with the following six generations:

The first generation was born before 1950, because of the long-term wars and internal strife, most of them seldom had the chance to receive modern education, they were the generation shaped mostly by the traditional (premodernism) Chinese culture.

The second generations was born in the 1950s, they are the first generation born after the foundation of the People's Republic of China. In their childhood and teenage years they witnessed a series of modernization reforms in China, which aimed to rapidly transform the country from an agricultural society into a socialist society through rapid industrialization and collectivization, for example: land reform movement (1950-1952); Three Major Reforms of Socialism (1953-1956) , The Great Leap Forward (1958 to 1962) .

From 1966-1976 when most of them were transitioning from youth to adult, they experienced another reform again ---- the Culture Revolution ---- a radical movement in China which purged the remnants of traditional (premodernism) and capitalist elements from Chinese society.

Since they witnessed a series of strenuous modernization reforms in China during the most important periods in their lives (childhood, teenagers, youth), or in other words, grew up in a period in which Chinese society had experienced the most strenuous modernization reforms, they (the generations were born from 1950-1960) were the generation that were influenced most deeply by the meta-narrative of modernity, and had the strongest sense of historical responsibility.

That may explain why in the films produced (especially the films made before the end of 1990s) by the Chinese film directors of this generation, for example, Zhang Yimou 张艺谋 (born in 1950), Chen Kaige 陈凯歌 (born in 1952), Tian Zhuangzhuang 田壮壮 (born in 1952) , we can always find reflections about the national history and destiny.

The third generation was born in the 1960s. Most of this generation also witnessed the culture revolution (1966-1976) and were also influenced by the nationwide modernization movements, while because of their young age at that time, they were not deeply involved in it.

And as time entered the close of the 1970s when most of them were still teenagers, with the Chinese national college entrance examination was restored, they got broader chances to receive higher education; and at the same time Chinese reform and opening-up policy was started, they encountered the postmodernism culture "sneaked" from the western countries. As a consequence, compare to the generation before them, the views of this generation were more diversified and more open.

While, since they grew up in an age of print media, and what they received at school was the modernism education, modernism still deeply influenced them. The famous Chinese film director Jiang Wen 姜文 (born in 1963) was one of the representatives of this generation, similar to his European peers deeply influenced by modernism, the form designs of most of his films, for example "*The Heat of The Sun*" (1994) , "*The Sun Also Rises*" (2007), showed an obvious feature of postmodernism narrative style.

The fourth generation was born in the 1970s. In the childhood or teenage years of this generation, television began to get popular in China. That is, they were the first generation in China that grew up with the company of television, meanwhile, since modernism was not rooted in China like it was in European countries at that time, it meant there was not a deep-rooted habit of seeing in the temporal dimension needing at that time to be conquered by the Chinese, it seemed to be getting much easier and natural for this generation from their childhood or teenager onwards to get used to the postmodern way of seeing (to see in spatial dimension).

While the mainstream concepts and values or attitudes of the traditional (premodernism) Chinese culture and modernism culture still played important role in their awareness, for the traditional (premodernism) Chinese culture and modernism culture existed in the environment they grew up and had strong influence on them too.

At the end of 1990s when the generation began to become the dominating force of society, the internet began to get popular in China. Naturally, they became the main force of the first generation of Chinese internet users.

Facing the world online, what challenged them mostly was not how to get used to the way of seeing the internet calls for, but how to overcome the cultural shock brought by what they were seeing online ---- amounts of different views online would veritably challenge the mainstream concepts and values or attitudes of traditional (premodernism) Chinese culture and modernism culture they received since their childhood.

The fifth generation was born in the 1980s. Same as the generation which was born in the 1970s, they were also the generation that grew up with the company of television. Difference was that when most of them were still teenagers, the internet began to get popular in China, which meant they got contact with different views online at a younger age, and were less restrained by the mainstream concepts and values or attitudes of the traditional (premodernism) Chinese culture and modernism culture ---- compare to the generations before them, they were more egoistical and more honest with their heart, while not caring too much how others thought about them.

The sixth generation were born in and after the1990s. Most of them (especially the ones born after 1995) were grew up with the popularity of internet in China. They are generation internet ---- digital natives.

Most of the creators and the audiences are **the generation born in the 1970s** and **the generation born in the 1980s.** The common features of the two generations are: they were both the generation grew up with the company of television; in the period (from the end of 1990s to the mid of 2010s) of the most intense collision between the internet culture and traditional (premodernism) culture and modernism culture in China, they were the main force of the Chinese internet users.

For the two generations, they have neither the strong sense of historical responsibility like the generation born in the 1950s, nor the modernism way of seeing (seeing in the temporal dimension) needing to be conquered like the generation born in the 1960s. As the generations grew up with the company of television, it seemed much more easy for them to accept the postmodernism way of seeing in spatial dimension directly. While they have to face the special cultural context in China at around the end of 1990s to the mid of 2010s. In this case, they chose *wulitou* as their unique way to express themselves.

Unlike the postmodernism narrative, for Chinese *wulitou* narrative, "time" is neither the main theme of it, nor the main device of its narrative. Thus *wulitou* can't be seen as an example of using typical (Western) postmodernism narrative devices. Instead, it was the product of the special cultural context in China during the period from the end of 1990s to the mid of 2010s, and was endowed with the following tasks by the special cultural context in China at that time:

1, Go on to carry the unfinished task of modernism in China ---- to subvert the outdated patters/fashions of the premodernism.

2, Do as what the postmodernism did in Western world ---- to subvert the meta-narrative of modernism.

CHAPTER 5: THE DESTRUCTION IN *WULITOU* NARRATIVE

5.1   Schema and Archetype

> "We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves. Our vision is continually active, continually moving, continually holding things in a circle around itself, constituting what is present to us as we are." [146]

When we look at things, no matter the tendency of the dimension of the act of our seeing is more close to spatial dimension or temporal dimension, consciously or unconsciously, we always like to put things "in a circle around itself" (the spatial/temporal context of it), and by constituting the spatial or temporal orders/relations between things and ourselves, we perceive what we see as a whole (which is constructed with spatial/temporal relations), rather than a sum of independent things.

That is, the world in our sights is constructed with a series of spatial or temporal relations/orders between things and ourselves. In this sense, the process of the act of our seeing can be viewed as a manifestation of the instinct demand of human beings to build orders/relations between things and ourselves.

However, just like a house can't be built without its building frame structures, to construct the world, it is also needed to extract some frame like patterns from these various orders/relations between things and ourselves we perceive every day. Otherwise, the world will not be constructed and can't be explained. And as for these frames like patterns, to borrow the term of cognitive science, we may call them "**schemata**" ---- thus the word "schemata" will be used herein to mainly refer to the recurring patterns of our perceptual interactions that give coherence and structure to the world around us.

Because of the different personal experience between individuals, the schema perceived by different individuals may differentiate. While, we should note that the schema we

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[146] John Berger (1972), Ways of Seeing, London, P9

talked about here mainly refers to the "common schema"---- the schema that is perceived and shared by the members of a cultural group commonly.

"Common schema" comes from the common environment in people's eyes, which may include many different aspects, such as the geographical natural environment, economic environment, political environment, cultural environment, technical environment etc. Therefore, for the various common schemata in a cultural group, what they reflect may respectively correspond to the different aspects of the common environments.

For example, "Da Jiang Dong Qu" "大江东去"("The river going to the east") is a common schema developed from the ancient Chinese' common perception of the phenomenon that the rivers (including the mother river of the Chinese nation --- Yellow river) flow from the west to the east of China, for the natural geographical environment in China is that the terrain of the western part is higher than the eastern part of China.

While, "Nan Geng Nü Zhi" "男耕女织" ("male cultivating and female weaving") is a common schema perceived by ancient Chinese, which reflects the natural economic mode in ancient China; "Wanban Jie Xiapin, Wei You Dushu Gao" "万般皆下品，惟有读书高" ("To be a scholar is to be the top of society.") is the common schema reflecting the ancient Chinese political system of selecting officials through the imperial examination; "Yi He Wei Gui" "以和为贵" ("harmony is the most precious") is a common schema which reflect the traditional Chinese cultural concept to deal with inter-personal relations and daily activities.

These common schemata show us, what makes the existence of plenty of colorful common schemata in a cultural group is none other than the multifaceted nature of the common environments humans live. Therefore, logically, it should be the multifaceted environment humans live that lead to a variety of different kinds of "experience of perceptions and activities", and those different kinds of "experience of perceptions and

activities" respectively create plenty of colorful common schemata, on the basis of which different aspects of culture are developed.

While most importantly, these schemata do not exist independently of each other, in our sights, they are also constructed further with spatial/temporal relations as a whole one. Only that in the sights of the people in different eras or areas, they may be constructed in different ways.

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As we have said before that the story may originate from the instinct demand of human beings to build orders/relations between things, therefore, as the frame structures, which are extracted from the orders/relations we find and build in our daily life, schemata must be integral to the construction of narrative. But, how do they work in the process of the construction of narrative?

Back to the fictional scene we give as an example in chapter 2 (THE ACT OF SEEING, STORYTELLING AND MEDIA): *A nervous cat jumped up on a table, knocked down a flower vase on the table, the flower vase rolled down onto the ground and smashed into pieces.*

Please pay attention that here the "leading role" in the scene is a nervous cat. In fact, it is a common scene in stories: a nervous cat jumping on desk or windowsill to show there is coming something mysterious or dangerous.

But why is it here a nervous **cat** rather than a nervous **dog**? I mean, as we know, the dog can also jump on somewhere (for example, a sofa or a bed), why not show the coming mysterious or dangerous scene by describing a nervous dog jumping on a sofa or a bed?

Obviously, it is because to jump on a sofa or a bed, is not a dog's typical response to the mysterious or dangers things. Instead, it barks at them.

Since we often see the cat jumping on a desk or windowsill when it gets frightened and nervous, we naturally abstract the relation between a frightened cat and some mysterious or dangerous things as a schema. And as for the dog, we see the dog howling and barking often when there is coming something mysterious or dangerous, therefore, we may also abstract the relationship between a nervous dog and some mysterious or dangerous things as a schema, while it must not be an alert dog, but a howling and barking dog.

What does it mean? It shows what we create in a story is by no means without foundation ---- In a story, the plots we image, the scenes and pictures we describe, almost none of them are not based on the schema we perceive in our lives.

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The schemata (the common recurring relations between things) can not only be shown in a narrative through the author's direct description of what he/she "see" , but can also be shown often through the author's narrative with metaphorical technique or symbolical technique.

There are a lot of metaphors in all kinds of stories, especially in the fairy tales: The dragon in front of a knight is a metaphor for the obstacles that young men encountered in the pursuit of love (or a dream, or sign of success); The image of "witch" is a metaphor for the evil side of human's nature; The wolf is a metaphor for the possible dangers hidden in our surroundings...And in the fairy tale "*puppet adventure*", the nose of puppet Pinocchio that became longer is a metaphor for the price of lying which we usually have to pay in our lives.

The common use of these metaphors here is: to borrow a concrete/physical perceptual pattern (schema) to illustrate an abstract perceptual pattern, or in other words, it makes the abstract pattern easier to be understood with concrete/ physical patterns.

In this sense, what the term "metaphor" refers to here is not just " a linguistic mode of expression", but a matter of "thought or action". Or, in other words, it is a basic and

important way for humans to understand the world and construct relations between more abstract things, which as Mark Johnson says:

> "Metaphor, conceived as a pervasive mode of understanding by which we project patterns from one domain of experience in order to structure another domain of a different kind.... through metaphor, we make use of patterns that obtain in our physical experience to organize our more abstract understanding."[147]

This can explain why besides fairy tales, metaphors also exist in almost all of the variety of myths, folklores, and idiom stories, which accompany often with our childhood ---- for a child who has seldom knowledge and experience about the world, the physical image and schema for him is obviously easier to understand.

We can also find lots of symbols in stories, for example, the fallen leaves symbolize the "autumn"; the white pigeon is usually used to symbolize "peace". "A word, a phrase, or an image", as long as they are "used with some kind of special reference (which is what a symbol is usually taken to mean)"[148] are all symbols.

Question is that, for a symbol, how normally the symbolical meaning of it is produced?

The production of the symbolical meaning of a symbol is based on the orders/relations between things, for example, to borrow the image of fallen leaves to symbolize "Autumn", is based on the observable relations between fallen leaves and autumn ---- once autumn arrives, the leaves fall.

The relation between fallen leaves and autumn comes from our physical experience ----it is an observable one. While the symbolical meanings of symbols may also be produced on the relations that we can't observe it directly or perceive by our physical experiences. For example, to borrow the bamboo to symbolize the noble man ---- but how the relation between the bamboo and the noble man was built?

To answer the question, we have to get back again to the discussing of metaphor. Following George Lakoff and Mark Johnsen's point, "…conceptual metaphors are

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[147] Mark Johnson (1987), The Body in the Mind, Chicago. London, PXIV-PXV
[148] Northrop Frye (2000), Anatomy of Criticism, Princeton. Oxford, P71

grounded in correlations within our experience."[149] What we should note here is that, the "correlations" relevant to metaphors are experiential, not objective. To be more specific:

> "These experiential correlations may be of two types: experiential cooccurrence and experiential similarity. An example of experiential cooccurrence would be the MORE IS UP metaphor. MORE IS UP is grounded in the cooccurrence of two types of experiences: adding more of a substance and seeing the level of the substance rise. Here there is no experiential similarity at all. An example of experiential similarity is LIFE IS A GAMBLING GAME, where one experiences actions in life as gambles, and the possible consequences of those actions are perceived as winning or losing."[150]

So, how the relation between the bamboo and the noble man was built? If we borrow bamboo to symbolize the noble man, it is because we see in the noble man the "upright" quality, and we see the "upright" quality on bamboo too. Therefore, we build a metaphorical relation between the bamboo and the noble man ---- here the metaphor seems to be grounded in "experiential similarity". Based on the metaphorical relation, we thus produce the symbolical meaning of bamboo to symbolize the noble man. In this sense, **a metaphor can be developed into a symbol.**

And as you may have noticed that no matter if it is the metaphor or symbol, they all developed from the schema (the common recurring relations between things) we perceived/experienced in our lives----That is what we mean, that the schema can not only be shown in a story through the author's direct description of what he or she "see" , but can also be shown usually through the author's narrative with metaphorical technique or symbolical technique ---- Or, in other word, no matter in what kind of way to tell a story, the schema we perceive always plays a basic role in it.

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[149] Lakoff, George and Johnsen, Mark (2007), Metaphor we live by, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, P104
[150] Lakoff, George and Johnsen, Mark (2007), Metaphor we live by, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, P104-P105

Only what should be noted here is that, since the metaphorical relation between two things, which separate in two domains, is built by us artificially and "may depend on our understanding one kind of experience in terms of another" [151], it means the metaphorical relation may be changeable, therefore, the symbolic meaning of a symbol based on the metaphorical relation may also be changed easily.

For example, if we relate tiger to the **"good"** characters of a man, the symbolic meaning of a tiger may refers to "strong", "brave"; while if we relate it to the **"bad"** characters of a man, then it may symbolize for the personality of **"selfish"** and **"cruel"**.

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Now it is time for us to compare the term "schema" with another term "archetype", a key term in "archetypal criticism theory". Borrowing the definition Northrop Frye made, "archetype" refers to "a typical or recurring image "[152].

Comparing "archetype" with the "schema" referred to herein , we can find the two ones are similar, they both are: a kind of "recurring patterns/image" which exist in the field of our consciousness or unconsciousness to guide our mental activities (for example, construct the perceptual world or create a story).

And as we said the schema we discuss herein is a "common" schema, which can be accepted and communicated by most of the members of a cultural group; while archetype, since it exist in narrative, and the purpose of narrative is to be communicated, therefore, it is also necessary for archetype to be accepted and communicated by most of the members of a cultural group. In this sense, we interpret "archetype" as a kind of projection of the common "schema", which project the patterns from the domain of our cognition to the domain of our narrative. Or in other words, archetype is developed from common schema.

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[151] Lakoff, George and Johnsen, Mark (2007), Metaphor we live by, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, P104

[152] Northrop Frye (2000), Anatomy of Criticism, Princeton. Oxford, P99

The difference between the two ones is that when we talk about a schema, it normally refers to some relations between things, for example, the relations between an alert and fleeing cat and the mysterious or dangerous things.

While, "archetype" normally appeared in story as symbol: it could be an symbolical image, for example, "the geometrical figure of the cross" which symbolizes "the death of Christ". And no matter in what kind of form archetype appear in a story, we can always find a schema behind the archetype, for example, the archetype "the geometrical figure of the cross" is obviously developed from the schema (the relations between "the geometrical figure of the cross" and "the death of Christ").

Archetype shows as a symbol, but it does not mean that all the symbols are equaled to archetype. As we have said a story is created to be communicated, therefore, the premise for a symbol to be developed into an archetype is that most of the members of a cultural group have reached a consensus on the symbolical meaning of the symbol so that it can be understood and communicated. In this sense, as Northrop Frye says: "…the archetype is primarily a *communicable* symbol…"[153]

We can find lots of this kind of "a communicable symbol" which act as "archetype" in stories, in this sense, "…the narrative aspect of literature is a recurrent act of symbolic communication..."[154]

Therefore, "Just like the spectrum of colors in painting and the tonal scales in music provide internal orders within the materials of artistic creation"[155], archetype (schema) "provide the ground of coherence" for the creating of a story, without it, it is impossible for a story to be created, which as Northrop Frye says: "Poetry organizes the content of the world as it passes before the poet, but the forms in which that content is organized come out of the structure of poetry itself."[156]

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[153] Northrop Frye (2000), Anatomy of Criticism, Princeton. Oxford, P107
[154] Northrop Frye (2000), Anatomy of Criticism, Princeton. Oxford, P105
[155] Andrew H. Plaks (2015), Archetype and Allegory in the "Dream of the Red Chamber", Princeton. New Jersey, P13
[156] Northrop Frye (2000), Anatomy of Criticism, Princeton, P102

5.2 *Wulitou*: a Means to Deconstruct the Orders Between Things

Now back to the topic of the special cultural context in China when *wulitou* got popular in China. Before the end of 1990s when *wulitou* got popular in China, although the electric media (Televisions, radios, tap players, video recorders), which have the postmodernity feature, had already entered in average families, and meant the postmodernism began to be popular in China.

While, since the limited channels and especially the one-sided communication characters of the electric media (which means the audiences were only the receivers of the information arranged by the media), for most of the Chinese at that time, what and how they saw were still limited.

And since what we can see and how we should see was decided by this one-side communication mass electric media, the "mainstream" attitudes and values about such as what is "right", what is "wrong", what is "nice", what is "bad", what is "beautiful", what is "ugly" , and so on, were mainly shaped by the mass media.

For example, before the end of 1990s in China, after dinner every night, the most common scene in most of the average Chinese families was that all of the family members sat together to watch TV.

"*Xinwen lianbo*" "新闻联播" ("*CCTV news*"), "*Xi You Ji*" "西游记" ("*Journey to the West*") (1986), "*Hong Lou Meng*" "红楼梦" ("*A Dream of Red Mansions*") (1987), "Huanzhu Gege" "还珠格格" ("*Princess Pearl*") (1998), these were once the favorite TV programs for most of Chinese families, and an important part of the collective memories of the Chinese who have experienced this at that time. What these TV programs brought the Chinese at that time was not only entertainment, but also collective aesthetic tastes, values, and moral standards.

While, "mainstream" voices did not mean everything. What underlay the "mainstream" voices was the strong collision and fusion between different cultures ---- When historic premodernism which had a long history in China encountered with modernism and

postmodernism at almost the same time, certainly "hybrid energy" would be erupted ---- only needed a suitable time.

At the end of the 1990s, the time came. At this time, the internet began to get popular in China. Because of its prominent features of "bidirectional communications", the internet provided the average Chinese chances to express themselves. Consequently, from the end of 1990s when the internet got popular in China, it seemed that almost overnight people became used to record what they saw and what they though online, and expectantly more people read what they wrote online.

As a result, suddenly, lots of opinions rarely seen before were now surging up, and lots of phenomenon rarely seen before were also now being shown online. About this point, here we might as well borrow an article titled "1996—2015，网络流行语背后的文化变迁" ("*1996-2015, The Cultural Change behind The Internet Buzzwords*"）to illustrate it.

In this article, which was published on Sike website (www. sike.new.cn) in December 2015, the author of it pointed out, by observing the internet buzzwords which emerged during the 20 years between 1996 and 2015 in China, a notable phenomenon at this time is that there appeared large amount of internet buzzwords to express "**surprise**": "近 20 年来，表达"惊讶"的网络流行语数量是如此之多，角度是如此之丰富。"[157] ("In the past 20 years or so, there are so many internet buzzwords to express "surprise", and the angles of these buzzwords to express 'surprise' are so rich.")

These buzzwords, such as, "*pili*"" 霹雳 " ("thunderbolt"), *lei ren*" " 雷人" ("startling"), "*e di shen a* ""额滴神啊" ("oh my God"), "*xi si ji kong*" "细思极恐" ("when you think it over, it is horrible"), "*wo he xiao huoban men Dou jing dai le*" "我和小伙伴们都惊呆了" ("my friends and myself were shocked"), "*xia si baobao le*" "吓死宝宝了" ("I am freaked out!"), "*wo de neixin jihu shi bengkui de*""我的内心几乎是崩溃的" ("I almost had a nervous breakdown"), "*wu yu*" "无语"("I am lost for words"), "*gei gui le*" "给跪了" ("give me a break!"), "*hui sanguan*""毁三观" ("views-destroyed"), "*zhong kouwei*"" 重 口 味 "("heavy taste"), "*suishi shou bu*

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[157] Bai Ke 白客， "1996—2015，网络流行语背后的文化变迁" ("1996-2015, The Cultural Change behind The Internet Buzzwords"), From http://sike.news.cn/statics/sike/posts/2015/12/219488614.html

liao""随时受不了"("can't stand it at any time"), "*ye shi zui le*""也是醉了" (I feel so surprise as if I were drunk), "*huamian tai mei wo bugan kan*""画面太美我不敢看" ("I can't afford to take a look at it"), and so on. Each of these buzzwords has its own meaning and use, and as the author of this article states: "这些丰富多样的"惊讶流行语"，显示当前中国社会急剧变化、明显多元化，不同群体交流碰撞增多，以致于许多个体感到难以置信、难以理解的现象很多，情况较复杂。"[158] ("These rich and varied "internet buzzwords" to express "surprise", show that Chinese society nowadays is undergoing drastic changes and obvious diversification, and the number of interactions between different groups is increasing. As a result, there appeared many phenomenon, which are unbelievable and difficult for many individuals to understand, and the circumstances people face are getting more complicated.")

Among those large amount of strange phenomenon and different voices, the mainstream values and attitudes shaped by the mass media now naturally have to face serious challenge: it is getting harder for them to prevail in society.

As a consequence, what we "see" now is dramatically different from before ---- it is getting much broader, while much more chaos. All different opinions ---- opinions inherited from the premodernism era, opinions of the on-going modernism, and opinions of the new coming postmodernism, they were all striving to get the chance to express themselves.

What will human do when they discover they are suddenly in a "mess" world? Of course, they need to re-find and rebuild the orders of world again, for as we said before, the natural instinct of mankind is that they can't endure chaos of orders. And as a way for human beings to arrange the orders/relations between things and ourselves, story, at this time, naturally will become an important means for Chinese to reach this goal. But what they need to do, firstly, is to break the old orders/relations, especially the old schemata which construct the "mainstream" stories. Based on this background, *wulitou* as a way of narrative got popular in China.

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[158] Bai Ke 白客， "1996—2015，网络流行语背后的文化变迁" ("1996-2015, The Cultural Change behind The Internet Buzzwords"), From http://sike.news.cn/statics/sike/posts/2015/12/219488614.html

A narrative of *wulitou* style is normally a rich collage of classical stories and contemporary elements. To take some clips (schema) of the classical stories as its objects of copy, copy them, and then relate these copies with some contemporary elements together into a story is the typical feature of a *wulitou* style narrative.

For example, the movie "*Dahua Xiyou*"《大话西游》 ("*A Chinese Odyssey* ") (1994, Hongkong-Mainland, China). As we have introduced hereinbefore, the movie is "copied" from a famous Chinese classical masterpieces "*Xi You Ji*"《西游记》---- "*Pilgrimage to the West*".

While the "copy" in the *wulitou* narratives, by no means refers to be faithful to the original ones. On the contrary, normally the "clips" or "characters" are copied from the traditional classical stories with necessarily modifications ---- mostly in the form of "**parody**".

Therefore, as we notice, in the movie "*Dahua Xiyou*"《大话西游》 ("*A Chinese Odyssey* ") (1994, Hongkong-Mainland, China), although the name and look of the roles are basically copied from the original one, the copied ones and the original ones are dramatically different:

The image of Tang Seng in "*Dahua Xiyou*" (1994, Hongkong-Mainland, China)

The devout Tang Seng 唐僧(Tang Monk) now became a man who always talk endlessly; the valiant and invincible Sun Wukong 孙悟空 (Monkey king), who always stays away from womanizing, is now falling in love, and also is afraid to die.

爱一个人是那么痛苦！

The image of Sun Wukong in "*Dahua Xiyou*" (1994, Hongkong-Mainland, China)

Meanwhile, although there appear some plots which basically are copied from the original ones, for example, Guanyin bodhisattva let Monkey King to go to the Western Heave with Tang Monk to fetch the Buddhist scripture. But the whole story is no longer a story about how the Monkey king fights monsters on the way to fetching the Buddhist scripture to the Western Heaven with Tang Monk and their other three partners, but a story in which the Monkey King himself is a monster who falls in love with two girls successively.

Take the first season of "*Wan Wan Mei Xiangdao*"《万万没想到》("*Unexpectedness*"), the popular web series we also mentioned hereinbefore as another example, we can find that almost in every episode of this season, it takes some clips (schema) or characters of the classical story as its object of parody.

Episode	The objects of parody
episode 1	The classical Martial Arts Fiction
episode 2	"*Sanguo Yanyi*" 《三国演义》("*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*")
episode 3	The classical love stories
episode 4	"*Sanguo Yanyi*" "三国演义" ("*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*")
Episode 5	"*Pilgrimage to the West*"
episode 6	"*Guhuo Zi*" "古惑仔" ("*Youth and Danger*") (Hongkong, 1996)
Episode7	Romantic idol dramas
episode 8	"クローズ" ("*Crows Zero*") (Japan, 2007)
episode 9	The ancient Chinese legend "*Bai She Zhuan*" "白蛇传" ("*White Snake*")
episode 10	Talent show program
episode 11	---------
episode 12	---------
episode 13	The classical Martial Arts Fiction
episode 14	The ancient Chinese legend "*Hou Yi* " "后羿"
episode 15	The Chinese folklore about Yuelao 月老 (a god who unites persons in marriage)

Question is: why is the *wulitou* narrative keen on taking classical stories as its objects of parody?

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In the web series "太子妃升职记" ("*Go Princess Go*") (2015), there appears a few times such a dialogue between the emperor and his ministers, as shown in the picture[159] below：

The minister: I have a word, while I don't know whether it is appropriate or not to tell...

The emperor: Don't do if it is inappropriate.

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[159] The picture is posted by one of its audiences whose online name is "Cassie" on the website of *Zhihu* 豆知乎（https://www.zhihu.com）

In the classical ancient Chinese stories, before the ministers give their suggestion or express some ideas to the emperor, normally they will firstly ask the emperor's permission by saying "I have a word, while I don't know whether it is appropriate or not to tell ..."

What needs to be noted is that the words said by the ministers above is in fact a kind of formulae, the purpose of which is to show the ministers' respect and awe to the emperor ---- it is taken as a necessary etiquette to manifest the minister's good education and politeness.

Therefore, when the ministers say the words, it doesn't necessarily mean that the ministers really think it may be inappropriate to propose their suggestions or their idea to the emperor. That is why in the classical Chinese stories, at this time, the emperor will usually answer his ministers quickly: "Say it"!

Obviously, the dialogue above appeared in the web series "*Taizi Fei Shengzhi Ji*" "太子妃升职记" ("*Go, Princess Go*") is also copied from the classical ancient Chinese stories, while it did not wholly copied the original one ---- what it copied is only the formulae said by the minister, while the emperor's answer ("Say it") is not copied here, instead, it is replaced by another answer:" Don't do if it is inappropriate!"

As John Berger says, "The meaning of an image is changed according to what one sees immediately beside it or what comes immediately after it."[160] Similarly, when the formulae said by the minister was followed by the emperor's answer "Say it! " in the classical ancient Chinese stories, as the audience, what we can feel is the emperor's stateliness and the respects his ministers show to him ---- we take the ministers' behavior to say the formulae as a normal and necessary etiquette.

Whilst when the same formulae said by the minister was followed by the emperor's answer "Don't do if it is inappropriate!", the feeling of us changes, we realize suddenly: yes, if it is inappropriate, then why say it? And if it is appropriate, why not say it directly? It is really not necessary to say the words for a person before he proposes his ideas or suggestions ---- we now don't take the ministers' behavior to say the formulae as a

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[160] John Berger (1972), Ways of Seeing, London, P41

necessary etiquette any more, but regard it as a manifestation of the ministers' "pedantries" and "hypocritical".

So, why is the *wulitou* narrative keen on taking the schema appearing in classical narratives as its object of parody? An important reason should be that normally a classical narrative is constructed by the classical schemata (classic/old orders/relations between things), and represents the classical/old "mainstream" attitudes and values.

Therefore, to parody selectively some "clips" (schema) from classical stories, and take these "slices" out of the original context it belongs to, then put them into a new context by relating them with some contemporary elements together, could be an useful way to deconstruct the classical/old relations between things, and therefore, the classical/old "mainstream" attitudes and values.

In other words, once the "slices", which are "cut" from the "context" they belonged in the original narratives, and are put with other contents together in a new context, the "Aura" of the original ones will naturally go away. As a result, the old mainstream attitudes and values based on the classical schemata are deconstructed.

And among the classical schemata in the classical stories, the one that is most easily to be taken as the objects of parody by *wulitou* narrative is the metaphorical relation ---- for as we have said, the metaphorical relation between two things is usually built by us artificially, so, the metaphorical relation between things may be changed (especially when the circumstance we live is changing) ---- It can also help us explain why the classical narratives, especially the mythical narratives, are the ones that are parodied most often by *wulitou* narratives ---- for a mythical story is usually a story full of metaphors.

Take "*Xi You Ji*"《西游记》("*Pilgrimage to the West*"), one of the best-known mythical novel in China as an example. As a mythical story, we can find a lot of metaphors in it. For example, the four main characters in the story: Tang Seng 唐僧 （Tang Monk）, Sun Wukong 孙悟空（the Monkey King）, Sha Hesang 沙和尚（Sha Monk）, Zhu Bajie 猪八戒（Pigsy）, in fact respectively are metaphors for four important virtues in Confucianism, that is, Tang Seng 唐僧 （Tang Monk） is metaphor for "Ren" "仁"（"benevolence"）; Sun Wukong 孙悟空 （the Monkey King） is metaphor for

"Zhi" "智" (wisdom); 沙 和 尚 (Sha Monk) is metaphor for "Zhong" "忠" ("loyalty"); Zhu Bajie 猪 八 戒 (Pigsy) is metaphor for "勇" ("valiant").

In this sense, the Chinese classical novel "*Xi You Ji*"《西游记》("*Pilgrimage to the West*") is not only a mythical story, but a story *metaphor for* the mainstream "attitudes and values" (moral standards), which was highly valued in the traditional Chinese society.

While just by putting the copies of the "slices" from the mythical novel《西游记》---- "*Pilgrimage to the West*" into a new context, which as it did in the movie "*Dahua Xiyou*"《大话西游》 ("*A Chinese Odyssey*") (1994, Hongkong-Mainland, China), the "仁" ("benevolence") of Tang Monk no longer deserves to be highly valued, in fact, it now looks a bit ridiculous; the "智" (wisdom) of 孙悟空 (Monkey King) no longer means he is the one that only has a reason to be rational and emotionless, on the contrary, like any ordinary man, he can also love and be loved, and also has weakness in his character.

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By copying the slice of classic narratives, putting the copies with other content together into a new context, "*wulitou*" style becomes a popular and effective means for the Chinese young internet users to deconstruct the old schemata which inherited from the premodernity era or the modernity era. In this sense, *wulitou* can be viewed as a manifestation of the struggle between the voices of the young groups and the mainstream societal conventions (the "old" relations between things) .

Therefore, as we may have noticed, the ones that appear together with the copied "slices" of classical narratives often in the *wulitou* narratives have content concerning to vulnerable/minor groups, and represent to the subculture / non-mainstream attitudes and values, which are different from the "mainstream" attitudes and values.

Take "*Taizi Fei Shengzhi Ji*"《太子妃升职记》("*Go Princess Go*") (2015) as an example again. It is a web series mixed with the copies of the classical plots of different

stories, which include imperial-harem competition and romance. While what make it dramatically special is it's leading role's gender change ---- the leading role changes from male to female accidentally when he time-travels from modern world to ancient times: In order to escape from being mobbed by his ex-girlfriends, the modern playboy Zhang Peng 张鹏 accidentally falls into the water, when he wakes up, he finds his soul has time-traveled to the ancient time, and possessed the body of the Crown Princess of Nan Xia 南夏 called Zhang Peng Peng 张芃芃, who has just fallen into water and died from drowning.

Before the time-traveling:
Zhang Peng 张鹏, a modern playboy. Captured
from "*Taizi Fei Shengzhi Ji*" (2015)

After the time-traveling:
Zhang Peng Peng 张芃芃, the crown princess. Captured
from "*Taizi Fei Shengzhi Ji*" (2015)

As a consequence, the romance between he/she (the body of whom is the Crown Princess of Nan Xia 南夏，Zhang Peng Peng 张芃芃, while the soul of whom is the modern playboy Zhang Peng 张鹏） and the Prince of Nan Xia 南夏 becomes a noticeable and controversial topic.

As a straight man, naturally, at the beginning the leading role cannot accept his/her female body, and reject to get close to the Prince ---- this is also conforms with most of the audiences' expectation of the behavior and attitude that a straight man should have.

While with the development of the plot, the audiences found their attention are gradually shifted from the gender issue of the leading role to the enjoyable plots, the

romantic scenes and the lovable characters ---- even sometimes, the audiences found they've forgotten that the Crown Princess is really a man.

After the time-traveling: The Prince and the Crown Princess. Captured from"*Taizi Fei Shengzhi Ji*" (2015)

Or maybe we'd rather suggest that it is the director of the drama who intended to let the audiences forget the Crown Princess's real gender, just as one of its fans, whose ID is @ Quynie, puts it: "The leading actress is very pretty. It is also easier in the drama to believe that she is a woman and we see in the last episodes that they are putting less of her man voice like they want us to forget her gender."

And the ones forget the Crown Princess's real gender are not only the audiences, but also the Crown Princess himself/herself: he/she seems to be gradually accepting of his/her new body and even the love of the prince, as we found in one of the last episodes, the Crown Princess himself /herself says: "我是彻底接受了我的身体". (" I guess I have already totally accepted my new body".)

"I guess I have already totally accepted my new body". Captured from "*Taizi Fei Shengzhi Ji*" (2015)

And with the development of storyline, the audiences found they are in a dilemma: how should they treat the romance in the drama, like is it a BG (Boy and Girl) or a BL (Boy's love) romance? Maybe you prefer to take it as a BG romance, but you can't ignore the fact that the soul of the leading actress is a male; Or you may prefer to accept it as a BL romance, but the appearance of the leading actress make it hard to remember his/her real gender. Finally, you may come to a conclusion that in the face of true love, gender is not as important as you think---- This is exactly what the director want to tell to the audiences.

Firstly let one of its leading roles changes from male to female, then let us get used to the leading role's female identity in ancient time, and gradually accept the romance between the leading actor and the leading actress, while ignoring the real gender of the leading actress ---- obviously, 《太子妃升职记》("*Go Princess Go*") (2015) is a web series that speaks for homosexuality.

By fusing the homosexuality with the copied classical plots together, it successfully attracts the audiences' interest and leads the audiences' attention to the inner world of homosexual emotion ---- According to the Airui Shuju 艾瑞数据 (iResearch data)："太子妃升职记中的，变性、BL 等网文热点，吸引全民关注，由此掀起了点播热潮。'男男 CP'更是吸引了在校学生关注度…"。[161] ("The topics in *Go*

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[161] Ai Rui 艾瑞: "Go Go Princess" Biaoxian Liangyan, 90hou Cheng Shoushi Zhuli" "《太子妃升职记》表现亮眼，90 后成收视主力", 2016. 3.10, http://www.sohu.com/a/62409147_118197

Princess Go about transgender and BL, attract the public attention, and therefore triggered a boom of its online broadcasting. Especially the topic about "Gay Couple", it has attracted the youths' special and wide attention…). More importantly, it successfully deconstructs the old schema about love and gender (love should happen between boy and girl), by expressing the attitude: in true love, soul is more important than body, what make people fall in true love, is not the lover's body, but his/her soul, which as the leading actress says in the drama: "Love can cross gender."

When it comes to the topic about the concern of *wulitou* narrative to the vulnerable/minor groups, a name that we must not ignore is 周星驰 (Stephen Zhou), one of the most respected directors and actors welcomed by Chinese youth, who has a very large number of fans in China ---- almost all of the main characters in the *wulitou* movies by him are "small potatoes" who came from vulnerable groups.

Take "*Gongfu*"《功夫》 ("*Kung Fu Hustle*") (2003) as an example, this is also a movie fused with copies from many different classical stories, which including many famous movies, for example 《七十二家房客》 ("*The House of 72 Tenants*") (1973, Hongkong), 《如来神掌》 ("*Buddha's Palm*") (1964, Hongkong), 《六指琴魔》 ("*The Six-fingered Lord of the Lute*") (1965, Hongkong), "The Shining" (1980, U.S.A), "*The Untouchables*" (1987, U.S.A) , "Spider-Man" (2002, U.S.A), and the famous martial arts novel, for example, "神雕侠侣"（"*The Return Of The Condor Heroes*") by Jin Yong 金庸.

While different from the classical hero in film, the film deconstructs the relation between hero and their image (the image of hero should always be cool, charming and good-looking), in this film, not only the leading actor at the beginning of the film is just a scruffy-looking 'hoody' who has achieved nothing, but also the other main characters, they are all different from the classical image of heroes expected by us: It's hard for us to imagine that the dull and silent hard-working Qiang, the sissy tailor, the slippery cook, they are all kung-fu masters; it's even harder for us to imagine that the beautiful and elegant Xiaolongnv 小龙女 ---- the leading character in the martial arts novel "*Shendiao Xiaolv*" "神雕侠侣"（"*The Return Of The Condor Heroes*") by Jin Yong 金庸), becomes a middle-aged fat woman who always has a cigarette in her mouth and wears a pair of slippers, with many curlers curling in her hair; and her loyal lover Yang

Guo 杨过, no longer as cool and handsome as it described in the novel, but becomes a hen-pecked middle-aged man, who likes to peek at other women taking a bath.

The leading role --- a scruffy-looking 'hoody' in "*Gongfu*" ("*Kung Fu Hustle*") (2003) by Stephen Zhou

Although these characters have no charming appearance and all of them are "small potatoes" , who live at the bottom of the society, at the critical moment in the face of evil, they show their kindness and sense of justice ---- they are ordinary, while they are also real heroes. That is, to be a hero is not necessary to be related with cool and charming image. No one is born to be a hero. An ordinary people, even he who achieved nothing, even he once went astray, as long as he keeps kindness and dream in his heart, there is still chance for him to be a hero ---- it deconstruct the old schema of hero.

5.3　The Carnival, Grass Root, Parody and *Wulitou* Narrative

As we said *wulitou* can be viewed as a manifestation of the struggle between the voices of the young groups and the mainstream societal conventions (the old schemata) ; Or, if we take it as a type of comedic narrative, then, to borrow Northrop Frye's words, *wulitou* narrative might also be viewed as a manifestation of the struggle between two opposing sides ---- "the hero's society" and " the society of the *senex* and triumphs" --

-- "The hero's society is a Saturnalia, a reversal of social standards with recalls a golden age in the past before the main action of the play begins"[162], thus, from the view of comedic theory modes, *wulitou* story born to have a kind of spirit of Saturnalia or Carnival, for it aimed to fight against the power, and deconstruct the rigid social standards through a "dramatic irony way".

In this sense, from the beginning, *wulitou* narrative seems to have a naturally close relation with grass roots ---- It is bottom-up, rather than top-down fashion. When it comes to the grass root feature of *wulitou* narrative, a name of person we should not ignore is Hu Ge 胡戈 and his representative *wulitou* work "*Yige Mantou Yinfa de Xuean*"《一个馒头引发的血案》("*A Murder Case Caused by a Steamed Bun*") (2005).

In the end of 2005, Hu Ge, an originally Chinese freelancer, made a short video called "*Yige Mantou Yinfa de Xuean*"《一个馒头引发的血案》("*A Murder Case Caused by a Steamed Bun*") (2005) and uploaded it online, in the 20- minutes video of which, a large amount of the scenes borrowed from the film "*Wu Ji*" 《无极》("*The Promise*") (2005) (the setting of which was in an ancient world), were edited together with the slices cut from other video materials, such as the Chinese TV program "中国法治报道" ("*Government Law Report*") and the performance video of "*the shanghai circus city show*", and formed a *wulitou* style narrative, which was completely different from the original one of the film "*Wu Ji*" 《无极》 "*The Promise*" (2005) .

The short video quickly got popular online and led to a battle between Hu Ge 胡戈 and Chen Kaige 陈凯歌, the director of the film "*The Promise*" (2005) and the representative of the fifth generation of Chinese film directors. Chen Kaige was so angry about what Hu Ge did to his film, that he threatened in the end to sue. The battle between the two ended with Hu Ge's apology, but "*A bloody case caused by a Steamed Bun*" unexpectedly opened the prelude to the prosperous times of online *wulitou* videos in China. It shows as a style of narrative, *wulitou* went from cinema to internet, and the producer of it also expanded from professional team to ordinary netizens.

A computer, a simple camera, some video editing software, one internet cable, only with these things, it is enough for a *wulitou* story lover to create his own *wulitou* story.

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[162] Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, Princeton. Oxford 2000, P171

After "*A Murder Case Caused by a Steamed Bun*", there are successively appeared many *wulitou* videos create by ordinary internet users. Such as "*Wulongshan Jiaofei Ji*"《鸟笼山剿匪记》("*Bandit Suppression in the Bird cage mountain*") (2006), "*Chunyun Diguo*"《春运帝国》("*the empire of Spring Festival travel rush*") (2006)…and so on.

As the popularity of these *wulitou* stories, the producer of these stories ----- most of who are ordinary internet users, gradually became familiar to the Chinese online audiences. Beside Hu Ge, the producers came from the grass root includes, Jiaoshou Yi Xiaoxing 叫兽易小星 for instance, who later became the producer of the popular web series《万万没想到》 "*Unexpectedness*", which we have mentioned a lot hereinbefore.

<p style="text-align:center">********</p>

Because of its grass root feature, and meanwhile, as we mentioned that it often takes the classical story as an object to parody, *wulitou* is also having an intimate relation with **parody**, or even in some person's eyes, *wulitou* is equal to **parody**. But, is *wulitou* really equal to parody?

Undoubtedly, in *wulitou* stories, we can easily find parodies. For example, "*Yige Mantou Yinfa de Xuean*"《一个馒头引发的血案》("*A Murder Case Caused by a Steamed Bun*") (2005), the whole story form parodied the Chinese TV program "中国法治报道" ("*Government Law Report*"); and in addition, its scenes and events parodied the film "*Wu Ji*"《无极》("*The Promise*") (2005) and the performance video of "*the shanghai circus city show*". Moreover, the advertisements in the video, as the picture below shows, is also an interesting parody:

Man Shen Shampoo advertised in "*A bloody case caused by a Steamed Bun*" (2005) by Hu Ge

The idea of the advertisement above obviously originated from the special hair style of the character Man Shen 满神 in the film "*The Promise*" (2005). By ironically imitating the special style of her hair, which is always standing up, Hu Ge, the maker of "*A Murder Case Caused by a Steamed Bun*" (2005), therefore made the advertisement about a fictional shampoo, the brand of which is named after the hair's owner ---- "Man Shen", and edited it into "*A Murder Case Caused by a Steamed Bun*".

Obviously, the shampoo in this advisement is a fictional one, and it is not made for any special business purpose, instead, it is only a spoof which was made and put in the story just for fun by making a joke on Man Shen's special hair style.

Or, other examples: in Stephon Zhou's film "*Tang Bohu Dian Qiuxiang*" "唐伯虎点秋香" (*Flirting Scholar*) (1993), the famous advertisement appeared in the scene when the protagonist Tang Bohu 唐伯虎 and another character Hua Furen 华夫人 (Mrs. Hua) tried to make each other take poison ---- Both Tang Bohu and Mrs. Hua suddenly turned their heads to face the audiences, and began to make advertisements for the poisons they tried to make each other to take just now. Obviously the advertisement here was also just a fictional one, the purpose of showing it here was not for selling the poisons, but just only a spoof of the television advertising commercials, which aimed to reach an effect of humor or satire.

The advertisement made by the leading roles in "*Tang Bohu Dian Qiuxiang*" (1993) by Stephen Zhou

In a word, as we see, parody surely an important narrative device in the *wulitou* narratives, or in other words, the popularity of *wulitou* means the wide use and the acceptance of parody. About this point, the article "*Wulitou Xushi Lun*" "无厘头叙事论" (*Wulitou Narrative*) written by Yin Kangzhuang 尹康庄 and Wang Wenjie

王文捷，provides us some more illustrations: "2002 年至 2003 年间，《广州文艺》策划了数期"学生专号"，先后组织、登载了包括清华大学、北京大学和中山大学等高校在内的学生作品。"("During the years from 2002-2003, students' works from famous universities like Tsinghua University, Peking University, Zhongshan University were published with several special issues by *Literature and Art of Guangzhou.*"). Among these special issues, the 7th in 2002 was for Peking University. It turned out that in this 7th issue, "专号刊载出的叙事性作品（小说、剧本）共 6 篇，却有 5 篇属于'戏仿/名著重写或曰拟古写作。"("five out of six narrative works (novels and scripts) are parody works") ---- Thus, as what is concluded by Dai Jinhua 戴锦华: "通观近年的北大校园创作，戏仿/名著重写或曰拟古写作是其中引人注目的现象之一。"[163]("Generally speaking, one of the most significant characters of the art and literature creations by the students of Peking University in recent years is the wide use of parody."). And not only in this special issue for Peking University, "在清华大学、中山大学的专号中也不乏其例"[164]("similar cases were also found in the special issues for the Tsinghua University and Zhongshan University").

Parody is not only widely used in the creation of *wulitou* narrative works, but also appeared often in young people's daily slang or jokes, for example, the popular saying among Chinese young people in around 2006: "黑夜给了我黑色的眼睛，我却用它来翻白眼" ("The dark night gives me black eyes, but I use them to express my bad emotions by rolling my eyes") ---- the object of this saying parodied is from the famous poem "*Yi Dai Ren*"《一代人》("*One Generation*") written in 1979 by the famous Chinese poet Gu Cheng 顾城, and the original words in the poem are "黑夜给了我黑色的眼睛，我却用它寻找光明" ("The dark night gives me black eyes, and I use them to seek brightness").

So, *wulitou* do have intimate relation with **parody**, or we may even say that the popularity of *wulitou* also means the popularity of parody, but I do not think that *wulitou* is equal to parody. For "parody" is obviously a kind of "intertextuality". And as what we have already stated when we make a comparison between "intertextuality" and

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[163] Yin Kangzhuang 尹康庄，Wang Wenjie 王文捷，Wulitou Xushi Lun" "无厘头叙事论", In Guangdong Shehui Kexue 广东社会科学 （"Social Sciences in Guangdong"）(2009.5), P140-P145
[164] Yin Kangzhuang 尹康庄，Wang Wenjie 王文捷，Wulitou Xushi Lun" "无厘头叙事论", In Guangdong Shehui Kexue 广东社会科学 （"Social Sciences in Guangdong"）(2009.5), P140-P145

"*wulitou*": "intertextuality" (here we specially refers to "parody") can be a way for "*wulitou*" narrative to make the "space-time" get mixed, but not all of the "intertextuality" are the manifestation of "*wulitou*" narrative, for what the "intertextuality" (here "parody") emphasized is the relation between different texts, while what the "*wulitou*" narrative emphasized is the relation between different "times" and "spaces".

CHAPTER 6: THE DECLINE OF *WULITOU* NARRATIVE

On December 2, 2017, the Tencent video (a famous Chinese video streaming website) released its 2017 annual index report. While this time we did not find any *wulitou* narrative that appeared in the top 10 Chinese web series list ---- An undeniable fact is, the *wulitou* fashion is fading in China.

How to explain the decline of *wulitou* narrative? If it is as what we have discussed, the popularity of internet in China changed the act of our seeing (what we see and how we see), and therefore bring the popularity of *wulitou* narrative. Then, the decline of the popularity of *wulitou* narrative in China means there must some changes that happened in the act of our seeing again, which directly caused the decline of the popularity of *wulitou* narrative. But what are the changes?

6.1 Another New Era

At the end of the year 2011 in China, there appeared an internet buzzword "*Erbi Qingnian*" "二X青年" (idiotic young people), it originated from a fun online campaign launched by some Chinese young netizens that spontaneously compared the differences between three types of young people ---- "*Putong Qingnian*" "普通青年" (ordinary young people), "*Wenyi Qingnain*" "文艺青年" (artistic young people)" and "*Erbi Qingnian*" "二X青年" (idiotic young people).

"短短几天，吸引了十几万参与"[165] ("In just a few days, the campaign attracted more than one hundred thousand of participants) --- on online social media, these participants posted composite photos or phrases, which usually consisted of three images of a young person (or a celebrity, animal, cartoon characters...etc.) with three apparent ordinary, artistic and idiotic statuses sought to interpret the ordinary characteristics, cultural sensibility and idiotic deeds of Chinese youth respectively through their own eyes.

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[165] Gao Peijun 高珮著，"Gezhong Qingnianfaner, Zongyou Yikuan Shihe Ni" 《各种青年范儿，总有一款适合你 》, China Youth Daily 中国青年报, 08. Nov. 2011

A composite photo from netizens

A composite photo from netizens

The posted composite photos and phrases show that in the eyes of most of Chinese young people: "*putong*" ("ordinary") youth normally refers to the ones that enjoy "a

low profile, ordinary life"; "*wenyi*" (artistic) youth "prefer a more romantic outlook", while "*erbi*"("idiotic") youth "love to be frank, unique or idiotic, as the mood takes them".[166]

With the widely spread of these posted composite photos, more and more Chinese youth rushed to tag themselves as " 二 X 青年" "*erbi* young people", the term " 二 X 青年" "*erbi* young people" ("idiotic young people") therefore became an internet buzzword in China. In the eyes of most Chinese young people, "*erbi*" represents an attitude of frank, humorous or idiotic to deal with pressure and stresses, they even create a slogan for themselves: "Erbi qingnian huanle duo!" "二 X 青年欢乐多！" (" So many joys that erbi young people may have! ").

While in fact, the word "*erbi*" is originally a local pejorative term in Northern China area, the meaning of which is "stupid, idiot, moronic ", normally it was used by people to swear at others. How to interpret the phenomenon that a term which originally has a pejorative meaning now is accepted and used widely as a tag by the young people to identify themselves? Obviously, with the popularity of it, the meaning of the term "*erbi youth*" has already been changed from pejorative to neutral (sometimes it even has a slight of appreciative meaning)----Here what we should pay attention to is the social significance of the meaning change of the term "*erbi young people*".

As we know, in a homogeneous cultural society, people prefer to take things as "black or white" , while in a multicultural society, people are more inclined to accept and accommodate differences. The Chinese youth's acceptance of the term "*erbi*" shows that the Chinese youth's views on things have already gotten more open and inclusive. "每个人都有普文二的瞬间，每个人都是普文二三青一体。"[167] ("Everyone has a moment of *putong*, *wenyi* or *erbi* respectively, and everyone could have *pu-wen-er* characteristics at the same time"), wrote a netizen named "春风春雨有时好" ---- What the netizen wrote is exactly a representation of a multicultural attitudes: to be *erbi* does not exactly mean that he/she has neither characters of *putong* nor *wenyi*; or to be *putong*

[166] Zhou Jing (Translated by Wendy), "中国青年新定义 – "普文二"" ("Defining China's Youth in a Word, or Three"), In China.org.cn, November 14, 2011, From
http://www.china.org.cn/learning_chinese/extensive_reading/2011-11/14/content_23909591.htm
[167] Gao Peijun 高珮著，"Gezhong Qingnianfaner, Zongyou Yikuan Shihe Ni" 《各种青年范儿，总有一款适合你 》, China Youth Daily 中国青年报, 08. Nov. 2011

or *wenyi* does not exactly mean he/she is not *erbi*. The three types can be accommodated on the same person, and reflect three different aspects of the person.

The popularity of *erbi youth* represents an attitude which is getting more open and inclusive, in the light of which, people (especially the young people) began to try not to judge a person with rigidly ethical and social standards. That is, the old schemata (old values and attitudes) is being deconstructed.

Take another internet buzzword "*Diaosi*" "屌丝" as an example to illustrate it. "*Diaosi*" "屌丝" is a new term created by Chinese young netizens, which at the beginning was used as a form of address for the "*Ai Cuo Qiong*" "矮矬穷" (short-ugly-poor person), who as opposed to the "*Gao Fu Shuai*" "高富帅" (tall-rich-handsome boy/man) or the "*Bai Fu Mei*" "白富美" (white-rich-beautiful girl /woman).

At the beginning of 2012, "*Diaosi*" "屌丝" got widely popular in mainland China. The young people (both male and female) rushed to tag themselves as "*Diaosi*" "屌丝"---- no matter he/she is really short-ugly-poor, or has nothing to do with these characteristics.

Not only that, the term "*Diaosi*" even was developed into a kind of culture ---- "*Diaosi*" culture ---- around the key term "*Diaosi*", there appeared lots of cultural productions which including web series, for example, "*Diaosi Man*"(2012-2015), and novels, music and cartoon. And even the popular German TV series "*Knaller Frauen*" was translated in Chinese as "*Diaosi Lady*".

Why *Diaosi* is so popular and can be developed as a kind of cultural phenomenon? "*Diaosi*" does not mean "absolutely without merit". A "*Diaosi*" can also have some shining points in his characters, just like the "small potatoes" in the "*wulitou*" films by Zhou Xingchi 周星驰 (Stephen Zhou).

For example, the leading actor Yin Tianchou 尹天仇 in "*Xiju Zhi Wang*"喜剧之王 ("*The King of Comedy*") (1999), who is a walk-on player that only plays some very small parts, usually without any lines in the films, but he still has his own dream of being a great actor, so he acts seriously and never give up working hard for it.
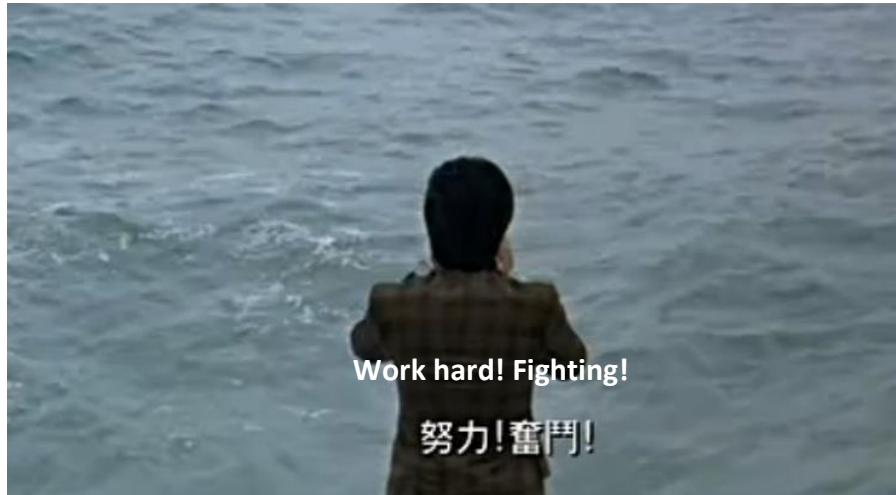
A picture captured from the film "*The King of Comedy*" (1999) by Stephen Zhou

Or another example, the leading role in "*Shaolin Zuqiu*"少林足球 ("*Shaolin Soccer*") (2001) by Stephen Zhou, who is a scavengers, living at the bottom of the society in the city, but still has many shining points in his characters which can move others.

A picture captured from the film "*Shaolin Soccer*" (2001) by Stephen Zhou

We can find many of these kind of "small potatoes" in the popular *wulitou* narratives, they show the audience the multifaceted characters of the "small potatoes". Influenced by the stories of these "small potatoes", the term "*Diaosi*" in the eyes of Chinese young people, in fact usually is not a pejorative term, they used it often as a way of self-deprecating humor.

To place themselves voluntarily into the group of "*Diaosi*", the Chinese young generation shows their attitudes which are getting more open and inclusive.

Another internet buzzword "*Jiyou*""基友" which became popular in mainland China at the end of 2011, similarly reflected the more open and inclusive attitudes of Chinese young people.

The original meaning of *Jiyou* 基友 refers to homosexual, while later it is used by Chinese young people to make a general reference of the best same-sex friends ---- By blurring the line between the same-sex friends and same-sex lovers, the Chinese generation put homosexuality in an equal position with other ordinary love and friendship, and show their understanding and emotional support to homosexuality.

With the deconstruction of schemata (old values and attitudes), what is changing in China is the change from the homogeneous society to a multicultural society. As a consequence, as we noticed, since 2011, more and more non-mainstream behaviors and phenomena have been accepted and incorporated into the mainstream language system. And because there is more tolerance and acceptance of the non-mainstream, in the face of the non-mainstream phenomenon, the Chinese internet users show less surprise, and more humorous and are self-deprecating.

Since 2011, a visible phenomenon online is that the internet users more and more often use humor and self-deprecating way to show their surprise. Look at the "internet buzzwords" that express "surprise" again, if we do further analysis on them, we will find that, for the "internet buzzwords" that express "surprise" before 2011, the objects pointed by them are mostly the events or behaviors that surprised the internet users (example are as the follows):

    "我靠" (Oh, Shit!) (1996-2000)

    "弓虽" (Terrific!) (2004)

    "饿滴神啊" (Oh, My God!) (2006)

    "人不能无耻到这个地步！" ("One should not be so shameless!") (2006)

    "雷人" ("startling") (2008)

    "霹雳" ("thunderbolt") (2008)

"我勒个去" (holy crap) (2010)

These terms usually are short and very emotional. They expressed the most direct and strong feeling when people are faced to the things that are strange to them, and show their unacceptable attitude to what they see: surprise or anger.

While for the "internet buzzwords" that express "surprise" after 2011 addressed to the netizens themselves. That is, the objects pointed by these "internet buzzwords" are the internet users' own mood when they are faced by these "surprised" events or behaviors (see the following examples):

　　"随时受不了" (I "can't stand it at any time") (2012)

　　"我和我的小伙伴们都惊呆了" ("my little friends and myself were shocked") (2013)

　　"也是醉了" (I feel so surprise as if I were drunk) (2014)

　　"画面太美我不敢看"（"I can't afford to take a look at it") (2014)

　　"吓死宝宝了" （"I am freaked out!") (2015)

　　"我的内心几乎是崩溃的" （"I almost had a nervous breakdown") (2015)

　　"涨姿势"（ "My knowledge is broaden") (2017)

Comparing to the internet buzzword before 2011, these ones appear after 2011 get longer with a stronger sense of self-mockery humors. What these "buzzwords" express are no longer the attitude of anger or surprise, but a kind of attitude of humor and self-mockery. Just as the article put it: "进入 2011 年以后…曾在网络上流行的"愤青心态"正渐趋隐退，取而代之的是调侃和吐槽。"[168] （ "From 2011 on, the once-populated 'angry mentality' online gradually retreated and was replaced by the attitude of humor and self-mockery"). And with humor and self-mockery, there're seldom anything can't be accepted.

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[168] Bai Ke 白客， "1996—2015，网络流行语背后的文化变迁" ("1996-2015, The Cultural Change behind The Internet Buzzwords"), From http://sike.news.cn/statics/sike/posts/2015/12/219488614.html

As we said that the population with experience of *wulitou* narrative have a special intimate relation with the two generation born in 1970s and 1980s, because the two generations born in 1970s and 1980s are the main group of the first generation of the internet users in Chinese mainland (in Chinese mainland, the internet got popular in around the year of 1997), who witnessed most directly the "conflict" between the old and traditional mainstream values and the subculture phenomenon that happened online in China, and experienced the culture shock deduced by the conflict.

The dramatic difference between what they see *before* the popularity of internet and what they see *after* the popularity of internet, make them seek for an useful way to deconstruct schemata, and the useful way they find is *wulitou* narrative.

In this sense, *wulitou* narrative, as an effective way to deconstruct schemata, for the internet users born in 1970s and 1980s in China, is more than a style of narrative, but a necessary means for them to help themselves overcome the cultural shock and adapt to the new experience they interact with the world.

That is, one of the most important reasons for the popularity of "*wulitou*" narrative in China is the demand of Chinese internet users to deconstruct the outdated schemata.

Now it has been about 20 years since the internet became popular in China. In the past 20 years or so, with the aid of *wulitou* narrative, the Chinese internet users have successfully deconstruct the outdated schemata, which means "*wulitou*" narrative may be not as necessary as before now for Chinese internet users, especially for the younger generations ---- the generations born in and after the1990s.

Different from the generations born in 1970s and 1980s, in China, people who were born in and after the 1990s (especially the ones that born in 1995 or later), they were the generation that grew up with the internet, which freed them from traditional cultural rules, and since their childhood, they had got used to seeing multi-cultural phenomenon. Consequently, for them, there are seldom things that are really considered to be shocking ---- "*Dou Xing*" "都行" ("Everything is Okay"), "*Keyi*" "可以" ("All right"), "*Mei Guanxi*" "没关系" ("Never mind"), they keep a casual and calm mindset toward the world, they try not to take anyone or anything too seriously, and identity themselves as "*Foxi Qingnian*" "佛系青年" ("Buddha-like youngsters") (a Chinese internet

buzzword which got popular in 2017), for their attitudes in some ways resemble Buddhism thinking.

A composite photo from netizens

A composite photo from netizens

If we take "Buddha-like youngsters" (佛系青年) as a portrayal of the Chinese younger generation's attitude to the world, then it will be easy to explain why the popularity of *wulitou* is now declining in China, for obviously, as far as the younger generations are

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concerned, who are becoming the main force in Chinese society, *wulitou* narrative, which was once taken as a means to deconstruct the old schemata by the generations born in 1970s and 1980s, now seems not so necessary for the generations born in 1995s or later.

In other word, the decline of the popularity of *wulitou* narrative shows us that we have enter another new era when what we see and what we get used to seeing are changing again ---- they are different from what we saw and what we were used to seeing when *wulitou* was popular ----That can explain why *wulitou* declined in China.

But is that all? As we said before media technology may shape our act of seeing, so before we give our conclusion, we had better to take a look at the development of media technology too.

6.2. From PC to Mobile Devices

From the perspective of the development of online video, the year of 2014 is definitely an important year in China. According to the 35th "*Statistical Report on Internet Development in China*" released by China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) in 2014, the mobile phone surpassed PC for the first time and became the first media terminal of online video in China.
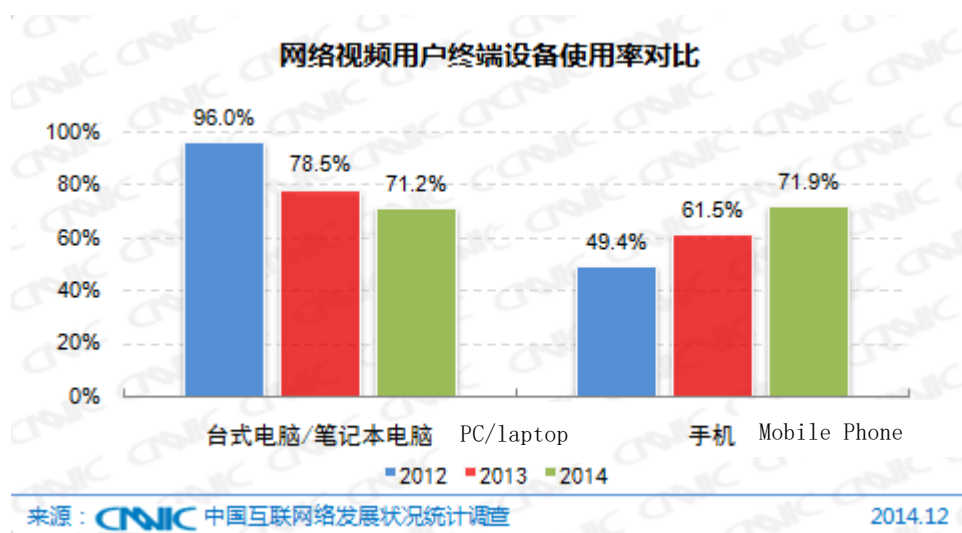
As it shows in the figure above, from 2012-2014 in China, the rate of mobile phone to be chosen as the media terminal by the internet users to watch online video continued to rise, in 2014, the rate has reached 71.9%, followed by desktops / laptops with the rate of 71.2%.
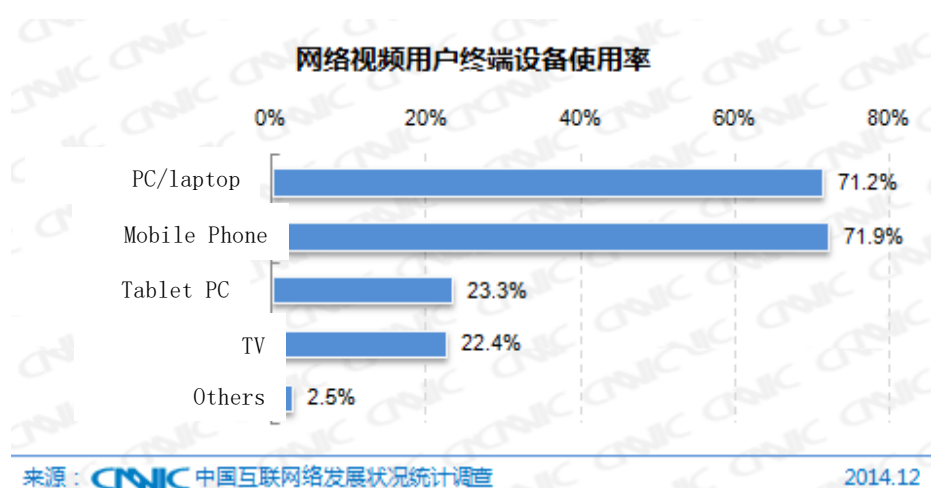
Besides the mobile phone, other mobile internet devices, such as tablet also began to be an important choice for the internet users to watch web video. That is, in 2014, the main media device to transmit online videos has shifted from the internet device (represented by PC) to the mobile media devices (represented by mobile phone and tablet) in China. In other words, from 2014 on, China officially goes from "the internet age" to "the mobile internet age".

And only about 2 years later, *wulitou* narrative started to decline in China ---- Is it only a coincidence?

There's an article online, the topic of which is《互联网让你有多烦躁？》 (*How irritable does the internet make you feel*?). In this article, the author of it puts forward an interesting question: "似乎我们在手机上阅读即使是很长的文章，都不会感到烦躁，基本都能看完。有些网页可能比新浪的首页还要长，为什么这个时候我们突然就有了耐性？"[169] ("It seems that usually we can finish reading a very long article on a smart phone without getting the fidgets, even some articles are longer than the homepage of Sina website. Why do we suddenly have the patience in reading at this time?")

Many times, compare to sitting in front of the computer, it seems that when faced to the screen of our smart phone, we have more patience in reading ---- It is not only the author of this article, but also many other persons have the same feeling.

On "Zhihu" "知乎", the most popular Chinese question-and-answer website, there is a similar question asked by an internet user: "为什么在手机上可以看完很长的文章在电脑上就看不下去了？" (" Why can we read a long article on the smart phone, while can't stand it on the computer?") (as shown below):

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[169] Jason Ng, "Hulianwang Rang Ni You Duo Fanzao?" "互联网让你有多烦躁？" ("How irritable does the internet make you be?"), From https://kenengba.com/post/933.html

So far, the question got 61 answers on "Zhihu" "知乎". Although there are different forms of expression in these answers, basically most of these answers can be concluded to one sentence: the context of PC use and the context of mobile phone use are different. But what make the difference?

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"Why the movie screen is horizontal, while most of the books are vertical?" When I was asked the question by a friend of mine a few years ago for the first time, it did impress me ---- We are already used to horizontal movie screen and vertical books so much, that I never thought it could be a question.

Beside the possible reasons related with technology and business, for example, the "academy ratio" (1.375:1) of movie screen is determined by the physical size of the film area between the sprocket perforations (the universal standard is a frame that is four perforations high) and the width of the film itself is 35 mm; and as for the shape of the book, it is said that with vertical rectangle, the waste of paper during the process of paper cutting can be minimized.

The answer about the question above should also be related to the way of our seeing. When we watch movie (in the cinema), we keep a distance from the movie screen. And when we see a scene from a distance, the horizontal field of the view of our eyes will automatically get wider. Therefore, the horizontal shape of movie screen, can not only match well with the horizontal field of view of our eyes, but can also utilize the field of

view of our eyes maximumly when we keep a distance from the movie screen, to show us a richness of pictures and scenes on it.

Or in other words, the horizontal shape of the movie screen matches best with the distance of our eyes to the movie screen and the rich variety of scenes in a movie. Of course, you can also say that the distance of our eyes to movie screen matches best with the shape of the movie screen and the richness of pictures/scenes of movie; or the rich pictures/scenes of movie matches best with the distance of our eyes to the movie screen and the shape of the movie screen.

On the contrary, when we read a book, we take the book closer to our eyes (otherwise, we can't see clearly the words in the book). And when we see something near, for example, when we talk with others face to face, the sight of our eyes will naturally be focused as a vertical visual field. Therefore, a vertical book is most suitable for the visual perception of our eyes to read the texts in the book clearly.

Or in other words, the vertical shape of book matches best with the distance of our eyes to the book and the lines of words in the book. Similarly, we can say that the distance of our eyes matches best with the vertical shape of a book and the lines of words in it; or the lines of words in the book matches best with the distance of our eyes to the book and the vertical shape of a book.

What we discuss above imply that the physical/technological features of the media (for example, the shape of the media) could also be an important element which can influence both our act of seeing and the content of media.

Hence, to understand the differences between the context of PC use and the context of mobile devices use, we might have a look of the difference of the physical/technological features between PC and mobile media devices.

"Bigger Screen" or "Smaller Screen"

Firstly, the difference of the PC screen and the screen of mobile devices. Compare to the shape of the mobile devices screen, the screen of PC is bigger and wider. What does it make the context of media use different?

To face the screen of PC, what in our sight, are not only the screen of computer: Since our eyes are seeing straight forward, and there is some distance between PC and our face (for the size of the PC screen keeps us a distance from it), the sight of our eyes is wide enough to let other things easily enter into our sight. As a consequence, we are easier to be attracted by other things when we watch facing a PC.

While, when we watch a mobile device, we lean down our neck, our eyes are seeing toward the down direction, our eyelids are half-closed. Comparing with the distance between PC and us, the distance between the mobile media device and us becomes closer, therefore, our sight get narrower and smaller, and we are not as easy to be distracted by other things as we do when we watch facing a PC.

"Lean forward" or "Lean back"

Different from watching before PC, to watch before mobile, especially when we watch web videos, most of us choose to lean on a sofa or a bed, for the convenience brought by the most prominent physical feature of mobile device: portability.

Portability makes it possible for us to carry the mobile devices around with us, and use them in a huge variety of locations ---- On the way to work, at the bus stop, at the dinner table....we can always see a lot of people watch videos on their mobile devices.

What's more, because of its portability, we can choose different poses of our body freely when we use mobile device, which including leaning on the sofa or bed relaxedly, while the computer is not as convenient as mobile device is. Just as an internet user wrote on *Zhihu* "知乎" website:

("Our bodies are free when we use the mobile devices, we can change our pose freely, we can lie down or lie face down, we can raise our head or lower our head...we can use it any place, for example, sofa, bed, ground....that is to say, it is the device runs around the people.

While the screen of computer is fixed, people have to be around the computer. And all the furnishes ---- the computer table, the computer chair ---- they are all designed for work, with the pose of leaning forward, the comfortableness we can feel is limited.")

That is, when we use mobile devices, we have more freedom or opportunity to choose our body pose freely ---- for example, the body pose to "lean back".

That can explain why more and more internet user now choose to watch video on mobile device (mobile phones or tablets) rather than on compute, which as one of my friends told me: "The computers in my home have been leaved unused for a long time now". Since the mobile phones, tablets were used to watch videos conveniently, we've seldom watched videos on our computers again.

Craig Will pointed out in his article "*Engagement Styles: Beyond 'Lean Forward' and 'Lean Back'*", that "Lean forward" may implies "high activity". For example, when we lean forward before the computer, typically we may perform multitasking with email, Web browsing, word document, and switching tasks frequently.

Under this kind of "high activity" conditions and cues, users may find it very uncomfortable or difficult for them to concentrate solely on a single task such as reading

on a long-form article. It means, "Lean forward" may also be "associated with relatively low sustained attention."[170] "Lean back", in contract, may imply "low activity", and "high absorption" [171], which means, it may lead to concentrated and long-term sustained attention.

If this is true, then in the situation created by mobile media device when we watch on it, it can be expected that normally we are more patient and are paying more attention on what we are watching. Or in other word, the mobile device create a context of media use, which is more relaxing, private and easy for us to be concentrated and keep long-term sustained attention on what we are watching.

"Public Space" and "Private space"

Walter Murch writes in his book *"In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing"*:

> "The mid-twentieth century pessimism about the future of cinema, which foresaw a future ruled by television, overlooked the perennial human urge ---- at least as old as language itself ---- to leave the home and assemble in the fire-lit dark with like-minded strangers to listen to stories.
>
> The cinematic experience is a recreation of this ancient practice of theatrical renewal and bonding in modern terms, except that the flames of the stone-age campfire have been replaced by the shifting images that are telling the story itself. Images that dance the same way every time the film is projected, but which kindle different dreams in the mind of each beholder. It is a fusion of the permanency of literature with the spontaneity of theater."[172]

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[170] Craig Will, Engagement Styles: Beyond "Lean Forward" and "Lean Back", From
http://johnnyholland.org/2012/03/engagement-styles-beyond-lean-forward-and-lean-back/
[171] Craig Will, Engagement Styles: Beyond "Lean Forward" and "Lean Back", From
http://johnnyholland.org/2012/03/engagement-styles-beyond-lean-forward-and-lean-back/
[172] Murch, Walter (2001). In the Blink of an Eye. 2nd Edition. New York: Silman-James, P144

Walter Murch's words above enlighten us that there may exist some "common denominator" underlying the "physical context" of interpersonal communication and the "virtual context" of the interactions through media.

As Joshua Meyrowitz says "Most interactions through media can be described using an interpersonal analogue. "[173] Only when we describe a context of the interaction through media with an analogue of the interpersonal context, we can describe the context of media use vividly and explain precisely our specific behavior in a context of media use.

If it is as what Walter Murch says that "The cinematic experience is a recreation of this ancient practice of theatrical renewal and bonding in modern terms", we might as well take the context of watching movie as the "virtual reproduction" of the context of listening to a story (most possibly the story is a myth or prophecy) around a bonfire with a group of people in the stone age.

The sense of ritual and the illusion of immersion, which illustrated by the darkness environment and the flickering light, are the "common denominator" of the two contexts.

Similarly, the context of watching television could be viewed as a "virtual reproduction" of the context of listening to a story around an old granny (or a storyteller) and chatting with friends on the doorstep. Relaxed and casual are the "common denominator" of the two contexts.

If we say that the context of film use is the analogue of the context that many people gather together to listen to a story around a fire or a stage; the context of TV use is the analogue of the context that a few friends gather together to chat; then the context of mobile media devices use might be the analogue of the context of being with an intimate friend ---- a context that make us be easier to immerse in the content you are reading/watching.

Even the place we use our mobile media devices is not always in our own private place, where can provide us a sofa or a bed to lie down, but as Joshua Meyrowitz points out,

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[173] Joshua Meyrowitz (1985), No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electric Media on Social Behavior, New York, P39

"... a society's set of social situations can be modified without building or removing walls and corridors and without changing customs and laws concerning access to places."[174]

When a person takes out his or her mobile phone, puts on his earphone, and begins to watch his or her mobile phone in a public space, for example during the lunch break in his or her office, even his or her body is still in the office, but once he or her begins to watch before his or her mobile phone, an information setting is already created by his or her mobile phone ---- a setting which beyond the physical location, and where he or she can relax himself or herself and enjoy his or her private time.

In this sense, by means of mobile internet media, users can manage their private space, can make their private space separate or integrate with the public space. That is, mobile internet devices can "create" a relaxing and private space (information setting) for us at anytime and anywhere ---- even there are no sofa or bed around us.

No matter the relaxing and private situation is a physical one or a virtual one which created by our mobile device, the behavior of us that caused by it is similar. That is, compare to PC, it is more easy for mobile device to make a private space "wherever and whenever", for it seems like it can separate you from the outer public space magically, and make you immerse into the inner private space.

Smaller screen and more portability, the technical features of mobile media make its user have more freedom and opportunity to "lean back" their body, and lead to concentrated and long-term sustained attention, meanwhile, create a private place which can permit its users immerse in their own media world ---- that is the difference between the context of PC use and the context of mobile media use.

If the features of *wulitou* including fragmentization, anachronism, dislocation, illogicality, incongruity, etc. are considered as the manifestation of the act of seeing shaped by the computer, then when the mobile media device ---- which is associated with long-term sustained attention and more private place, is replacing the computer, and is gradually playing more and more important role in our daily life, from the

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[174] Joshua Meyrowitz (1985), No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electric Media on Social Behavior, New York, P39

perspective of physical features of media, it should not be surprised for us to notice the decline of *wulitou* narrative.

6.3. Conclusion and Prospect

The particularity of this study lies on one hand in introducing *wulitou* to an audience abroad and on the other hand in linking the research field of narratology to cognitive science by integrating the human act of seeing into the study of *wulitou*'s popularity in China. Viewed from the human act of seeing, I take the point that narrative is an universal way for us to interpret the world, it is confined or shaped by the world we learn about ---- especially the world we see. I have explained how different acts of seeing (what we see and how we see), which will be different in different cultures and under different circumstances, may lead to different styles of narratives.

What I emphasize in this study is that, the pattern of the human act of seeing as a cognitive process "is **not** everywhere the same", and "it is **not** the case" for our eyes to "be open to all the possible inputs available in the world"[175]. Just like the people being confined by the images projected by the fire in Plata's cave, in most cases what and how we see is inevitably confined by all kinds of elements, for example, the biological characteristics of our visual system, our psychological status, the environments we live in…. among which, with the development of human society, the technology and social environment have been playing a more and more important role.

I have shown that the rise of the internet in the end of the 1990s, is directly connected not only to the time that *wulitou* narrative became popular in China, but to the very features which are characteristic to *wulitou* narrative. From "time" and "space", the two fundamental dimensions of the act of seeing, the rise of internet changed both what we see and how we see. "Timeless time" and "the flows of space", became the two most prominent features of time and space in the internet-based global "multimedia" system. Not only that, the rise of internet also brought a series of social, technological, economic,

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[175] Levis R. Bryant, "*Onto-cartography: An ontology of Machines and Media*" , P54

and cultural transformations, which then had massive diverse expresses/views surging up online.

Basing on these observations I suggested, to order chaos and make sense of the world, the Chinese, especially the ones that were born after the 1970s who are the main force of the Chinese internet users at the end of 1990s, had to find a way of narrative to subvert the old schemata, and interpret the new experience they interact with the world and therefore, this time, they chose the *wulitou* narrative.

In this sense, it is as Zhu Dake 朱大可 says："网络而非电影，才是大话生长的最惬意的摇篮" "The internet, rather than the film, is the most desirable cradle for *wulitou*", *wulitou* is a "新的策略" "new strategy" of a "群众性的颠覆运动" "mass subversive-movement", which is launched and participated mainly by the "小资青年" "petty bourgeois youth" ---- "70 年代后出生的青年知识分子以及更大范围内的青年学生" [176] "the young intellectuals, and young students in a wider range, who were born after the 1970s at that time".

What I also emphasize herein is that, the effect of the media on culture, as Marshall McLuhan says "will vary from culture to culture accordance the existing sense ratio in each culture" [177], for example: "…backward countries that have experienced little permeation with our own mechanical and specialist culture are much better able to confront and to understand electric technology. Not only have backward and nonindustrial cultures no specialist habits to overcome in their encounter with electromagnetism, but they have still much of their traditional oral culture that has the total, unified 'filed' character of our new electromagnetism. Our old industrialized areas, having eroded their traditions automatically, are in the position of having to rediscover them in order to cope with the electric age." [178]

I stated that China as a culture with a long premodernism tradition which was built upon traditional agricultural society and pays emphasis on the total unified "field" and the inner relations inside the total unified "field", Chinese culture, when it successively

[176] Zhu Dake 朱大可,"Ling Niandai: Dahua Geming Yu Xiaozi Fuxing""零年代：大话革命与小资复兴"，In The Chinese University of Hong Kong "21 Century"，香港中文大学《二十一世纪》，2001
[177] Marshall McLuhan, Understanding the media - The Extensions of Man, California 2013, P58
[178] Marshall McLuhan, Understanding the media - The Extensions of Man, California 2013, P39

confronted the electric media and internet media in the second half of 20th century, showed its own cultural character and provided a special cultural context which mixed premodernism, modernism and postmodernism together. So to say, the popularity of *wulitou* was also inseparable from the special context in around the end of 1990s in China.

I think that I have shown that *wulitou*'s popularity in China can be explained by integrating the human act of seeing (what we see and how we see) into my study. I have shown that the act of human seeing can strongly influence the styles of our narration and is itself also deeply influenced by both "the existing sense ratio in each culture" and the "development of new media technology". Which means, for the studies on narrative stressing questions such as "the formation and popularity of a given narrative style in a specific society", or "the different narrative styles in different societies", to combine the perspective of the human act of seeing and the special cultural context into the study can be a practical research approach.

Reaching the second ten years of the 21th century, Chinese culture confronts another new media technology again ---- the mobile internet and mobile media devices. Through the designs of the Apps for mobile media devices, once again Chinese culture shows its own character in the mobile internet age. Here we take WeChat, one of the most popular mobile Apps in China as an example:

Contrary to the "specialist habits" which are manifested often by the designs of the mobile internet services in the West, the design of WeChat shows a strong inclination to integrate different functions into one ---- in fact as we noticed, WeChat can not only provide function for people to contact with others, share daily blog or pictures with friends, and delivery document, it even provides the functions to read news, online payment, mobile recharge, pay for the basic living fees (such as the fees for electricity, water, gas and so on) …… It is an ecosystem rather than a simple App.

If as we said, what the popularity of the internet in China brought to us is a violent cultural collision between traditional premodernism culture, modern culture and postmodernism culture, then it can be predicted, with the widely use of the mobile

media devices, some changes will inevitably happen again ---- but what kind world it will bring to us this time?

Meanwhile, as we have mentioned, from the end of 1990s to the mid of the 2010s, in the nearly 20 years, *wulitou* narrative has experienced its period from the rise to the decline, and finished its historical task to deconstruct the outdated schemata. While what people need is not only the deconstruction of the old schemata, people's instinct to find/build relations between things asks for a reconstruction of the relations. Then in the post-*wulitou* age, with the coming of mobile internet media world, what kinds of new orderly patterns will be reconstructed by the new generations? And what kind of narratives they will create? We will wait and see!

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