



Reflection and Reconstruction of Reality in Film Art

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore the multifaceted ways in which film art both reflects and reconstructs the real world, along with the significant impact of this bidirectional interaction on social culture. Through an in-depth analysis of various techniques and illustrative case studies where film art represents, transcends, and reconstructs reality, the discussion delves into the aesthetic value and social functions of films. The study reveals that film art not only mirrors the real world authentically but also reconstructs it creatively through fiction and variation, thereby offering audiences profound emotional and aesthetic experiences. These findings provide essential insights into understanding the dual functions of film art, highlighting its role in both reflecting societal realities and presenting new perspectives. This research underscores the importance of recognizing the complex and influential role of film art, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of creative practices within the film industry and enriching cultural and artistic discourse.

Keywords

Film art; Real world; Reflection; Reconstruction

As one of the modern art forms, the film conveys aesthetic concepts through movement and composition in time. Film art not only records the real world but also transforms and reconstructs reality (Zhang Chi, 2024). This paper explores how film art reflects and reconstructs the real world through its unique narrative and expressive techniques and analyzes its impact on audiences and social culture.

1. The Essence of Film Art

Film is a modern art form that conveys aesthetic concepts through movement and composition in time. The primary task of film aesthetics research is to analyze the relationships and interactions between the creator, object, subject, and audience to reveal the aesthetic value and social functions of film art (Zhu Lin, 2021).

1.1 Recording the Real World

Film authentically records and showcases the diversity of the real world. Early documentaries such as "The Story of the Antarctic" and "The Footprints of Humanity" depict the true aspects of nature and human life. Through long shots and objective records, films immerse audiences in the real world, allowing them to understand and feel reality more deeply.

1.2 Transcending the Real World

In addition to recording reality, films transcend reality through fiction and artistic techniques. Performances, special effects, and narrative structures in films enable them to present a world richer and more diverse than reality. For

example, the science fiction film "Avatar" uses advanced 3D technology to create the virtual planet Pandora, providing an ultra-realistic visual experience for audiences.

2. Interaction Between Reality and Virtuality

2.1 Dependence of the Virtual World on Reality

The virtual worlds depicted in films are inextricably linked to the technological support and content mapping of the real world. Early silent films, limited by their expressive capabilities, often relied on exaggerated physical performances and simple narrative techniques to convey their stories (Wang Hualin, 2023). With the advent of color and sound in film, the ability of movies to portray realistic scenes and scenarios improved dramatically. The introduction of synchronized sound in the late 1920s and the development of Technicolor in the 1930s allowed for more nuanced and vibrant storytelling, making the filmic representation of reality increasingly convincing. In contemporary cinema, the use of advanced technologies such as 3D and 4D has revolutionized the viewing experience, creating hyper-realistic worlds that are almost indistinguishable from reality. The use of 3D technology allows filmmakers to add depth and dimension to the visual experience, making scenes more immersive and lifelike. For instance, James Cameron's "Avatar" (2009) utilized groundbreaking 3D technology to create the lush, alien world of Pandora, which captivated audiences with its detailed and immersive environment. The realism achieved in "Avatar" was not just a testament to technological advancements but also highlighted the intricate process of world-building in cinema, where every element—from the flora and fauna to the cultural practices of the Na'vi—was meticulously crafted to create a believable alternate reality. Moreover, 4D cinema, which incorporates physical effects such as moving seats, wind, and scents, enhances the sensory experience of watching a film, making the audience feel as though they are part of the on-screen action. This sensory immersion bridges the gap between the virtual and real worlds, providing a more comprehensive and engaging experience. For example, theme parks and special screenings of action movies often use 4D effects to intensify the viewing experience, making the audience feel every explosion and rush of wind, thereby creating a more profound connection with the film's virtual world.

2.2 Mutation and Sublimation of Reality

Films not only record reality but also mutate and sublimate it through artistic means. The concept of "artistic truth" in cinema is not merely about replicating reality but about reimagining it through a lens of creativity and imagination (Si Changqiang, 2024). This artistic interpretation allows filmmakers to explore complex themes and ideas in ways that pure realism cannot. A prime example of this is the "The Lord of the Rings" series directed by Peter Jackson. These films transport viewers to the fictional world of Middle-earth, a place rich with its own history, cultures, and conflicts. Through the use of elaborate set designs, groundbreaking special effects, and meticulous attention to detail, Jackson created a world that, while entirely fictional, felt real and lived-in. The depiction of Middle-earth allows viewers to reflect on various aspects of human society, such as the struggle between good and evil, the value of friendship and bravery, and the impact of power and corruption. By presenting these themes in a fantastical setting, the films invite audiences to consider these issues from a fresh perspective. The fantasy elements in "The Lord of the Rings" do more than entertain; they elevate the narrative to explore universal truths and moral questions. The portrayal of the epic battle between the forces of good, led by characters like Frodo and Aragorn, against the malevolent Sauron, echoes real-world conflicts and the timeless struggle for justice and peace. By engaging with these archetypal themes, the films offer viewers a means to process and understand complex real-world issues within a safe and imaginative context. Similarly, films like "Inception" (2010), directed by Christopher Nolan, delve into the realm of dreams and the subconscious. "Inception" uses the concept of dream-sharing to explore themes of reality, memory, and perception. The film's intricate narrative structure and visually stunning dream sequences challenge the audience's perception of what is real and what is imagined. This blurring of reality and fantasy encourages viewers to reflect on their own experiences and the nature of reality itself.

In both cases, the films use the virtual worlds they create to reflect on and interrogate aspects of the real world. By altering and enhancing reality, these films provide a deeper and often more poignant exploration of human experiences and societal issues. The interaction between reality and virtuality in film is a dynamic and multifaceted process. Films depend on real-world technologies and references to build believable virtual worlds, while also using artistic creativity to transform and elevate reality. This interplay not only enhances the aesthetic and emotional impact of films but also broadens the audience's understanding and engagement with both the real and imaginary worlds.

Through this dual function, films continue to serve as powerful mediums for reflection, critique, and innovation in the portrayal of reality.

3. Film Narrative and Expression Techniques

3.1 Long Takes for Objective Recording

Long takes are an important technique in films for recording reality (Wang Tianhui, 2024). By continuous shooting, long takes immerse audiences in a real scene. Long takes are characterized by lengthy shot durations and minimal camera movement, emphasizing a complete spatiotemporal continuity. This allows directors to present a more realistic and coherent visual experience, making audiences feel as if they are within the film's scene. For example, Alexander Sokurov's "Russian Ark" is a quintessential long-take film. The film uses a single continuous shot lasting 99 minutes to tell a historical story spanning time and space. Through this unedited shooting method, audiences follow the camera through various rooms of the Winter Palace in Saint Petersburg, witnessing several hundred years of Russian history. This technique not only enhances the realism of the viewing experience but also deepens the audience's perception and understanding of history. The use of long takes requires highly coordinated and precise execution during filming, from actors' performances to camera movements. This technique not only tests the skills of directors and actors but also demands high technical standards for cinematography. "Russian Ark" exemplifies this extreme use of long takes, showcasing the director's artistic pursuit and providing audiences with a unique viewing experience. Another classic example of long takes is Sam Mendes' "1917." This film uses the one-shot technique to tell the story of two soldiers during World War I. This method allows audiences to personally experience the tension and brutality of the battlefield, enhancing the realism and urgency of the film. The use of long takes ensures the story is told in a more coherent and realistic manner, making audiences feel as though they are part of the battlefield, experiencing everything the characters go through.

3.2 Montage for Subjective Collage

Montage is a technique in films that tells stories through the collage and editing of shots (Chen Xuguang & Zhang Minghao, 2023). Unlike the continuity of long takes, montage uses multiple shots to transition between different themes and times, creating complex psychological experiences for the audience. Montage is not only a technical method but also a unique way of expressing film narratives, creating a distinctive audiovisual experience through the combination of shots, segments, visuals, and sounds. A classic application of montage is in Sergei Eisenstein's "Battleship Potemkin." The montage editing in this film, particularly in the famous Odessa Steps sequence, rapidly switches between different perspectives to contrast the rebellious sailors with the oppressive military forces. This editing technique not only enhances visual impact but also deepens the audience's emotional resonance. Eisenstein's montage allows audiences to experience multiple emotions in a short period, from tension to fear to anger, greatly enhancing the film's narrative effect. Montage can also be used to express complex emotions and multiple narrative threads. For instance, Quentin Tarantino's "Pulp Fiction" uses montage to intertwine multiple characters and storylines, transitioning through different times and perspectives to create a complete narrative. This nonlinear storytelling method keeps audiences continually adjusting their understanding and expectations, increasing the film's viewing interest and depth. Additionally, montage can be used to express abstract ideas and concepts. Stanley Kubrick's "2001: A Space Odyssey" employs montage to connect the prehistoric era of apes with the future era of space travel, showcasing the development and evolution of human civilization. This technique not only provides strong visual impact but also prompts deep contemplation on human existence and the future.

4. Social Functions of Film Art

4.1 Reflecting Social Reality

Film art plays a crucial role in reflecting social reality, shedding light on societal issues and human emotions (Chen Y, 2024). For example, Italian Neorealist cinema, particularly the film "Bicycle Thieves" by Vittorio De Sica, vividly portrays the struggles of ordinary people in post-war Italy. The narrative follows a man whose bicycle, essential for his new job, is stolen and his subsequent desperate search for it. This film highlights the widespread poverty and unemployment of the era, emphasizing the daily struggles and profound despair of its characters. The authenticity of this portrayal is achieved through a combination of real locations, non-professional actors, and a focus on mundane

yet impactful events. The film's realistic style and emotional depth draw viewers into the protagonist's plight, fostering a deep sense of empathy and understanding. By focusing on the personal hardships of one individual, the film underscores broader social issues, making the audience more aware of and concerned about these problems. Beyond simply documenting these realities, films like "Bicycle Thieves" engage viewers on an emotional level, prompting them to reflect on and relate to the issues presented. This emotional engagement is vital as it moves beyond intellectual awareness, compelling viewers to feel the struggles of the characters, thus bridging the gap between the audience and the depicted reality. This connection can inspire viewers to consider and potentially act upon the social issues they witness on screen.

4.2 Reconstructing Social Reality

Films not only reflect reality but also reconstruct it, offering new perspectives and ways of thinking. Dystopian films, such as "1984," adapted from George Orwell's novel, provide a prime example. "1984" creates a fictional totalitarian society characterized by surveillance, oppression, and thought control. Through the lens of the protagonist's struggle for survival and freedom, the film explores themes of individual liberty, state control, and the consequences of totalitarianism. By constructing this extreme society, "1984" serves as a powerful tool for reflection and critique. It prompts audiences to consider the nature of freedom, the role of government, and the potential dangers of unchecked power. The film's stark depiction of a dystopian world functions as a cautionary tale, urging viewers to remain vigilant about their rights and freedoms in the real world. The artistic elements of such films—set design, cinematography, and narrative structure—enhance their impact. The oppressive atmosphere of "1984" is conveyed through claustrophobic settings, stark lighting, and a pervasive sense of surveillance, all of which contribute to the audience's immersion in this nightmarish reality. These artistic choices not only enhance the story's believability but also its emotional and intellectual impact on viewers. Moreover, reconstructing reality through film allows for the exploration of abstract ideas and complex societal issues in a more tangible and relatable way. Films like "1984" make theoretical concepts such as authoritarianism and personal freedom more accessible and engaging for a broad audience. By presenting these ideas within a compelling narrative, films can stimulate critical thinking and discussion, encouraging viewers to question and analyze the world around them. Film art serves dual functions in society: it reflects the real world, bringing attention to social issues and human emotions, and it reconstructs reality, offering new perspectives and stimulating critical thought. By engaging audiences emotionally and intellectually, films can inspire greater understanding and action regarding the societal challenges they depict. As such, the role of film in reflecting and reconstructing reality is not only an artistic endeavor but also a powerful social tool for education, empathy, and change.

5. Future Development of Film Art

5.1 Digitalization and Virtual Reality Technology

Modern films increasingly rely on digitalization and virtual reality (VR) technology, enhancing visual effects and expanding expression techniques (Patrícia B C, 2024). Future films may utilize VR and augmented reality (AR) technologies more extensively, creating more immersive and interactive viewing experiences. For example, VR films allow audiences to enter a fully virtual environment through headsets, interacting with characters and scenes, offering unprecedented immersion and participation. AR technology overlays virtual elements onto the real world, allowing audiences to experience film plots in real spaces, further blurring the line between virtual and real. Digital technology also makes the film production process more efficient and flexible. The widespread application of computer-generated imagery (CGI) enables many scenes that are impossible to achieve in reality. From realistic monsters to fictional planets, CGI provides filmmakers with unlimited imagination space. Additionally, digital technology facilitates the global distribution and dissemination of films, allowing audiences to watch the latest films anytime, anywhere via streaming platforms, significantly expanding the audience's reach.

5.2 Cultural Diversity and Globalization

As a globalized art form, films play an important role in promoting cultural exchange and understanding. The future of film art will emphasize the expression of cultural diversity, using stories and characters from different cultural backgrounds to enhance understanding and communication among audiences (Jiang L, 2023). This expression of cultural diversity not only enriches film content but also enhances its social function. For instance, recent

multicultural films like "Black Panther" and "Crazy Rich Asians" have achieved significant box office success and sparked global discussions on race, identity, and cultural recognition. Moreover, film production companies increasingly value diverse creative teams by incorporating directors, screenwriters, and actors from different cultural backgrounds to ensure films more authentically reflect diverse social realities. This diversity enhances the authenticity and appeal of films and fosters innovation and development in the film industry.

5.3 Interactive Movies and Audience Engagement

With the advancement of technology and changes in audience demand, interactive movies have garnered increasing attention (Guo Xiaoqing & Gong Yan, 2024). Interactive movies allow audiences to influence the direction and outcome of the story by making choices during the viewing process. This form of interaction not only enhances audience engagement and immersion but also opens new possibilities for film creation. For example, Netflix's interactive film "Black Mirror: Bandersnatch" enables viewers to make decisions at multiple points, ultimately leading to different endings. This film received widespread attention and praise for its innovative approach. The emergence of interactive movies has not only transformed traditional viewing experiences but also introduced new business models to the film industry. By collecting data on audience choices, film production companies can better understand audience preferences and needs, providing valuable insights for future film creation. Additionally, interactive movies offer new opportunities for advertising and product placement. By inserting relevant ads or product information at key decision points, brands can increase exposure and audience engagement.

5.4 Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development

As global environmental awareness increases, the film industry has begun to focus on environmental protection and sustainable development. Many film production companies have started implementing eco-friendly measures to reduce the environmental impact of filming (Huang Mingfen, 2024). For example, they use renewable energy, reduce waste emissions, and recycle props. Future film production will place greater emphasis on environmental protection and sustainable development, achieving a green transformation of the film industry through innovative technologies and management methods.

Moreover, as a mass media form, films actively promote environmental protection concepts. Many films tell stories related to environmental protection, guiding audiences to recognize the importance of environmental conservation and sustainable development. For instance, the animated film "WALL-E" depicts a planet covered in waste, highlighting the significance of environmental protection and inspiring audiences to take action.

6. Conclusion

Film art, through its unique narrative and expressive techniques, authentically reflects and reconstructs the real world, providing audiences with rich emotional and aesthetic experiences. Modern films utilize advanced technologies and diverse artistic methods to continually expand their expressive capabilities and social functions. Films are not only a medium of entertainment but also crucial tools for reflecting and reconstructing reality, significantly impacting social and cultural development. In the pursuit of technological innovation and artistic expression, film creation should emphasize storytelling and philosophical thinking to enhance its aesthetic value and social function.

In the future, as technology continues to advance and audience demands evolve, film art will keep developing and innovating. By leveraging digital technology, cultural diversity, interactive films, and environmental protection, films will offer audiences more diverse and enriching experiences, further solidifying their important role in modern society. The future development of film art requires not only technological advancement but also collective cultural and social efforts to achieve a brighter vision.

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