

Niu Xuebiao

postgraduate student

Stroganov Russian State Art and Industry University

Associate Professor

School of Design and Art, Xiamen University of Technology, China

e-mail: 330507761@qq.com

Henan, China

ORCID: 0009-0005-6675-1960

DOI: 10.36340/2071-6818-2023-19-3-22-38

WU CHENG'EN'S NOVEL "JOURNEY TO THE WEST" AND ITS RESOURCES FOR ANIMATED ADAPTATIONS

Summary: This article explores the potential for producing animated movies based on the Chinese classic novel «Journey to the West». The author traces the evolution of the plot and characterizes the main features of the famous literary work, the adaptation of which was repeatedly used not only by Chinese, but also by Japanese, Korean and other animators. Over the years and centuries, the pilgrimage of the Tang monk and his companions to India in search of the sacred sutras has evolved from historical accounts to folklore tales, and eventually to plays, after which the journey has become the subject of several novels by different authors, with Wu Chen'en's novel being the most renowned classic. And it is the very process of turning a real story and real people into a legend, a myth, geographical movement and physical travel into a metaphysical path, followed by characters whose image goes back to ancient archetypes that made the novel so popular during different centuries and in different countries. Furthermore, the article highlights the distinctive features of the novel that make it particularly suitable for adaptation through animation. Unlike written art, visual art can directly incorporate the images and forms of various

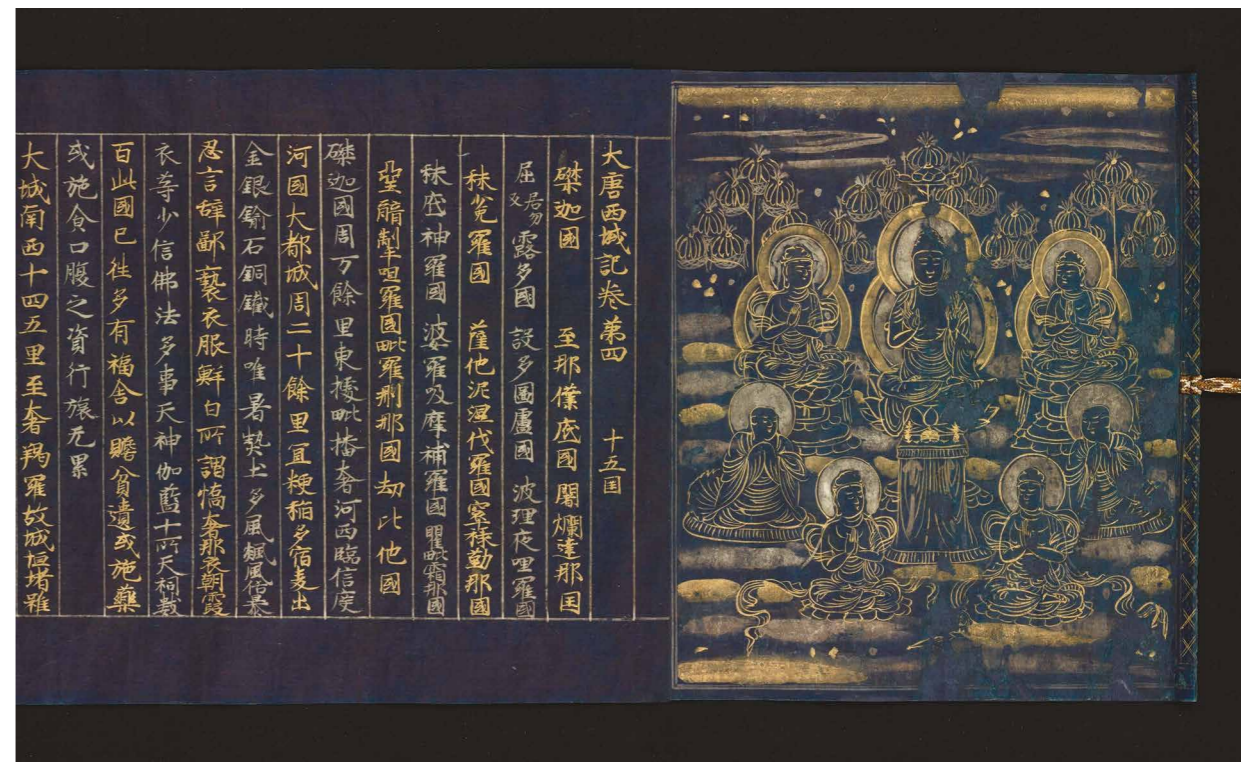
The numerous screen adaptations of Wu Cheng'en's renowned Chinese novel "Journey to the West" stem from the literary work's open nature, cultural depth, and abundant resources for visual and audiovisual representation, especially in the realm of animation. This serves as a captivating example of how innovation and tradition can be blended together.

folk art forms such as folk painting, sculpture, popular print, shadow theatre, Peking Opera, and traditional painting. Chinese animation based on the novel has successfully utilized these art forms. Additionally, one should consider the genre of the novel, which is rooted in the collective unconsciousness and rich in formal, plot, and thematic elements. As noted by Russian philologist and semiotician J. Lotman, animated cinema is the most appropriate means for adapting fantastic stories. At the same time, Wu Chen'en's novel «Journey to the West» has the value of not only a national cultural heritage, but also a global one. The author notes the important idea of the Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan about the relevance in the information society of the Chinese way of thinking with its idea of a net world and a net person. Animated films based on the plots of «Journey to the West», can effectively broadcast the values of the Chinese worldview and mentality and thereby contribute to the mankind's response to the challenges of the time.

Keywords: animation, literature, "Journey to the West", Buddhism, myth, folklore, Chinese mentality, fantasy, symbol, utopia, philosophy, paradox, conventionality.

The evolution of the novel

According to the researchers, the novel "Journey to the West" () was formed over the course of four dynasties: Tang (618–907), Song (960–1279), Yuan (1271–1368), and Ming (1368–1644). The order of the formation of the novel has also been determined. It begins with the historical record of a monk's journey, which is a collection of poems



Ill. 1. Excerpt from illustration for the fourth installment of the travel notes written by the Buddhist monk Xuanzang, titled "Great Tang Records on the Western Regions" ("Da Tang si yu ji"). The travel notes are comprised of 12 volumes and were published in the 12th year of Zhenguan reign, (i.e. 646). They detail Xuanzang's 19-year expedition through Central Asia and India.

called "The Story with Poems of How Tripitaka of the Great Tang Fetched Sutras" (大唐西域記), followed by the traditional theatre play¹ "A Tang Monk Goes to the West for the Buddhist Sutras" (西天取經記), the Yuan *zaju* play "Journey to the West" (西天取經記), the oral story "Journey to the West" (西天取經記), the lyrics of "Journey to the West" (西天取經記), and finally the simplified version, a monumental work in 100 chapters, also called "Journey to the West"².

The Chinese tale of the "Journey to the West" dates back over a millennium and involved the contributions of numerous individuals with varying beliefs and life values, many of whom remain

anonymous. The novel can be compared to a melting pot, as it has assimilated a vast array of folklore variations and authorial versions of the story from different individuals. Although the primary theme of the novel was a journey to retrieve Buddhist texts from China to India, it is challenging to determine if the book has any religious undertones, such as Buddhist, Taoist, or others, due to its various influences.

The folk tale and a shortened version of the novel "Journey to the West" circulated in China during the Ming dynasty. They were collected and supplemented by the innovations of Wu Cheng'en (吳承恩) in the mid-Ming dynasty, resulting in the classic novel "Journey to the West" in 100 chapters.

Over time, "Journey to the West" has been refined and improved, making it a classic and accomplished work. Paradoxically, it has also broadened the scope for its adaptation into various art forms, thereby showcasing its versatility to the world. In the Ming era, when the novel was written, the story of the Tang monk's pilgrimage had already become legendary. The experience of the Buddhist monk Xuanzang is recorded in the "Biography of the Tripitaka Master of the Great Ci'en Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty" (大唐三藏聖僧傳) and the "Great Tang

1. During the 1980s, the Shanxi Provincial Cultural Administration conducted a statistical study of traditional theatrical productions (as part of a state program to officially protect this type of work). During the study, they discovered a performance of the second year of the Wangli rule of the Ming dynasty. Interestingly, part of the performances were related to the story of the Tang monk's journey to the West. Upon further examination of the documents discovered, it was revealed that the performance shared a common plot with the novel, including the same characters such as Tang Monk (Xuanzang), Sun Wukong, Zhu Bajie, Sha Wujing, and White Horse.

2. Zhu Hongbo (2005). A Four-Hundred-Year History of the Journey to the West.— Shanghai: East China Pedagogical University, p.188.

Records on the Western Regions” (). These books were written by monks and serve as authoritative Buddhist literature with the aim of disseminating the teachings of Buddhism. It should be noted that the “Biography of the Tripitaka Master of the Great Ci’en Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty” is the primary source of the later history of the “Journey to the West”. The cultural origins of the novel Journey to the West can be explored by analyzing the plot and characters in surviving sources such as “Great Tang Records on the Western Regions”, “The Story with Poems of How Tripitaka of the Great Tang Fetched Sutras” (), “Biography of the Tripitaka Master of the Great Ci’en Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty”, and the novel itself.

Firstly, the story of the pilgrimage to the West underwent a significant evolution process. The true story is reflected in the “Great Tang Records on the Western Regions” and “Biography of the Tripitaka Master of the Great Ci’en Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty”. They narrate the real Xuanzang’s secret journey to India for Buddhist sutras that lasted for 17 years. Xuanzang’s journey spanned over 50,000 li. The books on his travels detail the political climate of all city-states and regions west of Gaochang (known as Turfan in modern-day China). The books cover 110 city-states that Xuanzang personally visited and 28 city-states that he was informed about. They provide information on their territory, geography, agriculture, trade, customs, arts, languages, writing systems, currency, religions, and more. These materials serve as valuable data for reconstructing the actual route of the journey and form the basis for the history of the journey to the West.

The story of Xuan Zang’s () pilgrimage for the sacred scriptures, common in the Tang dynasty, remained largely documentary. In the Song dynasty, the main character of “How the Tang Xuanzang Traveled for the Buddhist Sutras” was already the prototype of the Monkey King Sun Wu-kun (). This is a tale about how the mystical Monkey assists Tang Xuanzang () in acquiring a sacred scripture. The storyline is relatively straightforward, setting it apart from the typical narrative of Xuanzang’s quest for the sacred sutras during the Tang dynasty period.

Evidently, during the Song dynasty, the story of Journey to the West went through a noticeable transformation, which involved the introduction of



Ill. 2. Xuanzang and the magic Monkey. Mural painting from Yulin Grottoes Cave No. 3 (Guazhou, Gansu Province, China). Photo source: Wei Wenbin, Zhang Liming. (2019) Mural paintings depicting plots from “Journey to the West” and story of the monk Xuanzang retrieving the sutras. - Jiangsu: Fenghuang meishu publishing house. 306 c.

fictional elements. This led to the inclusion of a diverse range of mythical creatures such as shapeshifters, demons, prototypical gods and monsters, various celestials, as well as the Monkey and the god of the deep sands in the text. This was the basis laid for future transformation of the story. Nonetheless, it took approximately three hundred years for a literary masterpiece called “Journey to the West” to emerge during the Chinese Yuan Dynasty. The contents of this work closely mirrored the essential structure of the present-day story, which revolves around the journey of Tang monk (also known as Tang Seng, Tang Sage or Tang Sanzang), Sun Wukong, and other individuals to the Western Paradise in pursuit of holy texts.

The later versions of “Journey to the West” were largely adapted or expanded on the basis of the

Yuan period original work. As the story evolved, the religious themes waned while its artistic attributes gained more prominence. Once a religious Buddhist text, Journey to the West now belongs to the people and is no longer confined to temples. It is being read by secular storytellers in various public places, and has become a beloved national story that has gained rapid popularity as a novel about gods and monsters.

It can be concluded that the narrative of Journey to the West has undergone a lengthy evolution, transitioning from factual accounts to fictionalized versions, myth and folklore, from depictions of the tangible world to abstract concepts, and from a straightforward plot to a more intricate one.

The group of pilgrims underwent a transformation, shifting from ordinary people to divine beings such as gods and buddhas. In contrast to earlier texts where Xuanzang was the protagonist, the character of Song Wukong took on that role in the later versions. As the story evolved, the number of travellers gradually increased until the classic lineup of four was formed. The “Great Tang Records on the Western Regions” and “Biography of the Tripitaka Master of the Great Ci’en Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty” only mention Xuanzang and his accompanying monk as the travellers on the quest for Buddhist sutras. However, “The Story with Poems of How Tripitaka of the Great Tang Fetched Sutras” introduces fascinating characters such as the magic Monkey (), the sand (river) demon (), and others.

The group of four travellers finally appears in the *zaju* play “Journey to the West” by Yan Jinxian (), a collection of six books and twenty-four chapters. The group includes Tang Xuanzang, Sun Wukong (also known as Sun Xinghe), Zhu Bajie (), Sha Wujing (), and White Dragon Horse (). It describes not only the names and backgrounds of the characters, but also their relationships with each other, just as in the classic Journey to the West. This indicates that the personality, number of characters, and type of their relationships in the classic “Journey to the West” were formed during the Yuan and Ming dynasties³. It is on this background that the author of the classic novel, Wu Cheng’en created diverse and rich character portrayals using a variety of plots across the individual chapters of the novel. Many aspects of earthly life are involved, as well as the

3. Zhu Hongbo (2005). A Four-Hundred-Year History of the Journey to the West, p. 208.

supernatural world, including demons, gods, and Buddhas. The author employed metaphorical tales of gods and demons to depict the societal norms of the time. The portrayal of demons residing in the mountains, idling around, and preying on innocent women mirrors the harsh reality of bandits who terrorize the populace. Moreover, the transformation of Princess Iron Fan, a representative of the ruling class, into an earthly demon, and her confrontation with the protagonist Sun Wukong, symbolizes various social and political struggles.

In the play, Sun Wukong is portrayed as a valiant and clever protagonist, fearlessly battling against the malevolent powers of darkness, while the character of Xuan Zang remains true to the traits of the historical figure on which it is based. The story showcases a heroic and triumphant journey, demonstrating the unwavering spirit of the characters. They overcome various obstacles and dangers on their quest to obtain foreign writings. In chapter twenty-three, Xuan Zang returns to his homeland accompanied by all the immortals who have aided him on his journey.

This is a praise to Xuanzang for his courage and self-sacrifice in pursuit of his ideals. In the twenty-third chapter of the play, is hailed as a hero who benefits the people, which author concludes through the words of gods and Buddhas: “In China, the monks are sent to the West by the monks themselves, and to the South by the bodhisattvas in the South China Sea. Although the journey may be arduous, it can endure forever”. The message conveyed is that to achieve one’s goals, one must possess unwavering faith, work diligently, and persevere through challenges. This play in the genre of *zaju* is a crucial element in the evolution of the phenomenon under examination, as it establishes a strong basis for the novel “Journey to the West”. The depiction of the hero Sun Wukong in the play is arguably its most significant contribution.

However, it was Wu Cheng’en who created colorful characterizations of the protagonist and vivid portrayals of the other characters based on various versions of the text. He brilliantly described the monkey nature of Sun Wukong, who paradoxically combines the traits of divinity and humanity, and told his life story by adding the classic plot of the “Uproar in Heaven”. This allowed him to highlight the Monkey King’s wit, rebellious spirit, and immense strength, transforming him into a dramatic, mythological, and heroic character while eliminating negative details from previous incarnations. The result was a more three-dimensional and vivid image that emphasized



Ill. 3. Xuanzang and the magic Monkey. Mural painting from Yulin Grottoes Cave No. 3 (Guazhou, Gansu Province, China).
 Photo source: Wei Wenbin, Zhang Liming. (2019)
 Mural paintings depicting plots from "Journey to the West" and story of the monk Xuanzang retrieving the sutras. -
 Jiangsu: Fenghuang meishu publishing house. 306 c.

his fearless spirit in battles against demons and monsters and showcased his transformation from a monkey to a Buddha⁴.

To create Sun Wukong Wu Cheng'en drew inspiration not only from the stories of divine apes created by his predecessors but also aimed to depict the ideal of a legendary hero who must persistently strive and overcome numerous obstacles. This exceptional work combines elements of mystery, mythology, and fantasy, making it a remarkable example of imaginative writing. The depictions of Xuanzang, Zhu Bajie, Sha Wujing, and others showcase their journey from being ordinary humans or demons to attaining the esteemed position of Buddha.

Wu Cheng'en's "Journey to the West" is often categorized in European research as a picaresque novel with a Buddhist allegory. However, this classification of a Chinese classic literature using solely European aesthetic standards may not be sufficient. It is important to establish the connections between the various layers of this multi-dimensional text in order to fully appreciate its complexity and significance.

An in-depth interpretation of the novel, based on the interpretations of Chinese thinkers and a brilliant personal knowledge of Chinese culture, is given by the Russian Sinologist Vladimir Malyavin in his book "Twilight of the Tao". He points out that in the Chinese perspective, sensuality and reason were not viewed as opposing forces, unlike in the European tradition. Instead, they were perceived as a whole, cohesive entity. Wu Cheng'en wrote his novel at a time when not only did this traditional Chinese notion exist and take shape, but also when the extreme forms of both feelings and experiences on the one hand, and mind and spirit on the other, were linked together. Hence, the much-appreciated increase in drama and the heat of emotion in Wu Cheng'en's novel. As Malyavin notes, "Generally speaking, the idea of the unity of feeling and mind has been ingrained in the Chinese tradition, always inclined to identify mind with sentience. However, the idea of merging of the extremes of both brought about a radical shift in cultural values. This new perspective turned the original concepts upside down, emphasized the abnormal and the grotesque, relying on irony to stimulate imagination rather than knowledge. It is only within this new

4. It must be noted that in Chinese folklore there are several different types of monkey-like humans.

cultural paradigm, a masterpiece of new prose, the fantastic epic Journey to the West, could possibly emerge (the novel was initially published in 1592)"⁵.

The journey was perceived metaphorically as spiritual improvement with its the inevitable challenges and triumphs. "The comic mood and grotesque imagery of the novel are meant to remind us of the deliberate unreality of its events, for 'the treasure of the heart' in inexplicable in words."⁶ Sun Wukong, capable of taking on any appearance and living all possible lives, and "raving about all the world's history, would probably be the purest example of a schizophrenic subject if he did not remind Chinese readers of their supreme being, the royal dragon, capable of infinitely changing its appearance"⁷.

The life of the protagonist, as well as all his companions, is a journey, but "this journey takes place within the emptiness of the 'oneness of Tao' where individual lives are, in essence, only actualizations of one or another of the qualities of its 'spiritual physiology'". "These almost chaotic refractions, glimpses of 'the heart of all transformations', coincide with the typical forms of tradition that mark the limit of individual existence," the researcher points out, "but they themselves consist of a superposition of many forces and are therefore non-substantial, quite hollow. In the light of 'critical thought', they lose the appearance of wholeness and disintegrate into isolated fragments, which, in fact, determines the comic undertone of the novel: attempts to understand Sun Wukong's adventures are precisely what provokes laughter. Every value cancels itself, every image must eliminate itself."⁸ "The whole journey is a projection of the 'Heavenly Heart' onto physical reality, for all things find their existence in their own shadow. Here everything happens 'suddenly', 'out of the blue', and each thing is attested by something 'other'"⁹.

Such a "fall" of spirit into the concrete empirical existence of a literary character may appear as a fall solely to the Europeans who perceive it through the lens of their own European tradition. From

5. Malyavin V. V. (2003) The Twilight of the Tao. Chinese Culture on the Threshold of the New Age. — Moscow: IPC Design. Information. Cartography": OOO "Publishing House Astril": OOO "Publishing House AST": p. 147. — Available at: URL: <https://sredotochie.ru/wp-content/uploads/sumerki-dao-2003-scan.pdf> (accessed 22.02.2023).

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid, p. 148.

9. Ibid.

the Chinese point of view, the materialization of the spirit just certifies its authenticity, for “in the Chinese tradition the existence of the spirit is not diminished, but on the contrary, is certified by the act of its descent into the material world”¹⁰. According to Malyavin, in this instance Chan Buddhism gets incorporated into Chinese tradition.

The adventures of the magic monkey are both naturalistic and illusory, and thus comical. They fall into the gap of being, into the “between-being”, as Malyavin puts it, into the “co-existence of things”. Improbability becomes the criterion of authenticity, and Sun Wukong’s incredible exploits culminate in a state of utmost clarity and sobriety. The concept of uncovering truth within illusions and transformations is a distinctively Chinese perspective, which also happens to align with postmodernism.

Further in the article we argue that the novel about Sun Wukong expresses the idea of “mastery over the untamed heart”. For, “when the heart is unrestrained, a person becomes Mara, but when the heart is being tamed, person becomes Buddha”¹¹.

Resources for animated adaptations of novel

After analyzing the factors that maintain the coherence of the complex and multi-layered text of the novel, as demonstrated in V. Malavin’s research, it becomes clear that a simplistic sociological approach is inadequate, and it is unjust to view the novel solely as a mere children’s fairy tale. This is where the potential for animated adaptation, both in general and through the means of digital animation, becomes truly evident. We will refer to it as resources for animated adaptations of the novel.

The novel provides such a wealth of material in terms of form that almost any genre and medium can reasonably be chosen for adaptation. Despite being composed according to a certain literary canon, the individual storylines included in the novel are diverse in contents and style of presentation, which keeps the traditional reader and listener engaged and interested throughout the text. The novel boasts of a rich thematic content, with its action unfolding across three distinct worlds ranging from heaven to hell, and taking place in various settings such as huts, monasteries, roads, and palaces. Despite the diverse storylines featured in the novel, each plot reinforces fundamental principles such as trial, good and evil, struggle, help, salvation, etc.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid., p. 150.

It is important to note that “Journey to the West” is well-suited for analysis using the categories of Vladimir Propp, a Soviet folklorist and precursor to semiotics, due to its structural composition and character roles. Propp’s monographs, “The Morphology of the Tale” (1928) and “Historical Roots of the Wonder Tale”¹² (1946), discuss the ritualistic origins of tales, attributing their beginning to the rites of initiation — the notion that is fully supported by the novel. The novel has its roots in a true story, but in it the main character, the Tang monk, gets two distinct incarnations. In one of them his life was steeped in Buddhist temple rituals, while the other was filled with folklore and epic tales.

The novel encompasses universal topics, and the animator’s only concern is to determine whether their current audience is interested in a particular theme or not. Wu Cheng’en’s novel is also a reflection of the Chinese national mentality. Interestingly, this mentality has proven to be more compatible with the demands of the modern information society than the European or North American ones, as predicted by Marshall McLuhan. As a result, there are numerous Chinese animated adaptations of “Journey to the West”, ranging from “Princess Iron Fan” (1941) to “Monkey King: Hero is Back” (2015).

Over the past 80 years, China has produced 15 representative animated works based on “Journey to the West”. The novel truly offers inexhaustible possibilities for creative imagination. The world of fantasy is most suited to animation. The novel contains many photogenic, or so to speak, animatogenic characters and scenes. The fantastical world and mythological motifs, while arbitrary in nature, become even more so when translated into the language of animation. This aligns with Jury Lotman’s observations about cinema as a naturalistic art that doubles the naturalness of the surrounding world, while animation doubles the conventionality of the literary world (the animated film is one way or another based on the written word, at the very least in the form of a script)¹³.

To highlight, the animation has the ability to visually represent crucial aspects of human activity

12. Propp V. Y. (1928) Morphology of the Tale. — L.: Academia [Electronic resource]. — URL: <http://feb-web.ru/feb/skazki/critics/pms/pms-001-.htm> (accessed 10.03.2023); Propp V. Y. (2000) Historical Roots of the Wonder Tale. — Moscow: Lab-yrinth.

13. Lotman J. M. (1978). On the language of animated films // Semiotics of Culture. The publications on sign systems X. — Tartu. pp. 141–142.



Ill. 4. “Biography of the Tripitaka Master of the Great Ci’en Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty”, 10th Scroll. Written by Huiji, recorded by Yang Cong. 10th century. Old Uyghur script. Jute paper. Text found in 1930 in Xinjiang. Source: National Library of China.

that are inherently non-visual. For instance, how can we illustrate the essence of a scientist’s work when it appears outwardly as simply sitting and writing? Similarly, how can we depict the composer’s inner world when this activity, in its external form, has nothing to do with expressing their own inner world, but instead involves sitting and writing notes? To date, no one in the film industry has been able to capture the philosophy and symbolic world of images that cannot be seen with the eyes, touched, or smelled. However, humans are distinct from animals because they are symbolic animals, as demonstrated by German philosopher Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945). Utopias are symbolic worlds that are challenging or impossible to portray convincingly through naturalistic cinema, which emphasizes objective reality. Animated films, on the other hand, including those based on the novel “Journey to the West”, succeed in this regard due to the double conventionality of animation. Moreover, producing such animations is significantly more affordable and simpler, not to mention the various challenges and obstacles that come with traditional methods (challenges of animated films differ). There is no need to scout for natural locations, cast actors, or direct performers. The realm of 3D animation is constantly advancing, allowing for the creation of realistic portrayals of imaginary worlds, resulting in increasingly convincing animations. It is no surprise that it is now linked with postmodernism and associated with the name of French philosopher, cultural expert, and photographer Jean Baudrillard (1929–2007), who introduced the concept of hyperreality, in which

one cannot differentiate between reality and fiction. The foundation of hyperreality is simulacra — the phenomena of copies for which there is no original or the original is unknown. Baudrillard argued that the world has been converted into a realm of simulacra due to the emergence of electronic media, and describing the world of animation through this lens has already become a conventional approach among researchers¹⁴.

The “Journey to the West” is a complex and multi-dimensional text, as previously mentioned. It cannot be simply categorized as a fairy tale or a myth. Although the deeper layers may not be apparent to a casual reader, they still have an impact on them, even if they only perceive the surface level. To clarify, the novel can be considered philosophical at least in two aspects. However, it is important to note that the Western concept of philosophy, such as the categorical systems of Kant or Hegel, is not present in China. What China has instead can be referred to as wisdom and is reflective of the national Chinese mentality.

Firstly, the novel’s various plots depict the path towards the ideal through the characters’ actions. Comprising of 100 chapters, the novel showcases the surrealist fight for genuine ideals. This struggle employs the most practical and effective methods of combat, which, as Chinese scholars and V. Malyavin suggest, is a paradoxical approach that underpins Chinese philosophy. However, it is important to note that this is not a political interpretation. Rather, it

14. See, for ex.: Athes H. Baudrillard, Sepultura and Steve Cutts’ Animation. Dystopian Common Ground. // Hermeneia: Journal of Hermeneutics, Art Theory & Criticism. 2019. N. 22. P. 173–180. URL: http://hermeneia.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/14_Athes.pdf (accessed on 24.02.2023).

emphasizes the attainment of the highest human values through persistent efforts to overcome obstacles and unwavering diligence. For instance, the protagonist of the "Journey to the West" undergoes a transformation from a magical monkey to a Buddha, which serves as the central plot of the story. The true text — is a fantastical one. If the fantastical element does not reach the highest point, the text cannot be considered a fantastical novel. Yuan Yulin (袁雨林) in the preface to his novel stated that those who know the most fantastic stories also know the most real facts¹⁵. The use of high hyperbole, fiction, and fantasy are essential tools for transforming mythological and religious motifs into philosophical ones. In Chinese literature, numerous fantasy novels have been written, but "Journey to the West" stands out as the pinnacle of this genre.

The first eight chapters of "Journey to the West" narrate the origin story of the Monkey King, while chapters nine to twelve explore the reasons behind the quest for the Buddhist sutras and the birth of the Tang monk. The subsequent chapters, from thirteen to ninety-nine, detail the journey to obtain the sacred texts. Finally, the story concludes with one hundred and forty tales of the successful acquisition of the true sutra and the attainment of Buddhahood. These tales contain philosophical themes, such as the story of Sun Wukong who followed Taoism from birth in pursuit of immortality. After causing chaos in the heavenly palace, he was ultimately

imprisoned by Buddha beneath the Mountain of the Five Elements. This serves as a metaphor for fighting injustice through practical means, while also acknowledging that there will always be challenges beyond our current understanding. Although there are no universal rules for life, Sun Wukong's conversion to Buddhism and protection of Monk Tang allowed him to earn the title of Victorious Fighting Buddha (斗战胜佛) through his heroic actions. Happiness can only be achieved through persistent effort and hard work. "Journey to the West" narrates the tale of a Tang monk's quest for religious texts in India. However, the journey is composed of various stories, each with its own philosophical teachings. Even a single story can have multiple philosophical interpretations.

However, the text goes beyond just providing conclusions and warnings. It offers a comprehensive collection of texts that serve as a representation of Chinese mentality, acting as its "cardiogram" or "X-ray film". When reading the novel and watching the animated adaptations, the Chinese audience is able to reflect on themselves through a perfect mirror of self-awareness and self-contemplation.

To conclude, it is our belief that the classic Chinese literary masterpiece "Journey to the West" possesses abundant resources for animated adaptations. This fact holds value not only Chinese animators but also for a wider audience on a global level, especially in the current era of information.

REFERENCES:

1. Lotman, Yu.M. 1978. "On the language of animated films", *Semiotics of Culture. The publications on sign systems X*, Tartu, pp. 141–142.
2. Malyavin, V.V. 2003. *The Twilight of the Tao. Chinese Culture on the Threshold of the New Age*.— Moscow: IPC Design. Information. Cartography, p. 147.— Available at: URL: <https://sredotochie.ru/wp-content/uploads/sumerki-dao-2003-scan.pdf> (accessed 22.02.2023).
3. Propp, V.Y. 1928. *Morphology of the Tale*, L.: Academia [Electronic resource].— URL: <http://feb-web.ru/feb/skazki/critics/pms/pms-001-.htm> (accessed 10.03.2023)
4. Propp, V. Y. 2000. *Historical Roots of the Wonder Tale*.— Moscow: Labyrinth.
5. Zhu Yixuan, Liu Liuchen. 1983. *A collection of materials on the Journey to the West*, Zhengzhou: Zhong Zhou Publishing House.
6. Zhu Hongbo. 2005. *A Four-Hundred-Year History of the Journey to the West*, Shanghai: East China Pedagogical University.
7. Athes, H. "Baudrillard, Sepultura and Steve Cutts' Animation. Dystopian Common Ground", *Hermeneia: Journal of Hermeneutics, Art Theory & Criticism*. 2019. no. 22, p. 173–180. URL: http://hermeneia.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/14_Athes.pdf (accessed on 24.02.2023)
15. Cit.: Zhu Yixuan, Liu Liuchen (朱一玄, 刘柳尘). (1983) A collection of materials on the Journey to the West.— Zhengzhou: Zhong Zhou Publishing House. Malyavin's interpretation of these phrases in the preface is as follows: "If literature is not fantastical it cannot be considered literature, and fantastical that does not push boundaries cannot be considered fantastical. This suggests that the most incredible events in the world are the most genuine. Therefore, it is preferable to discuss the miraculous rather than the real, and the demonic rather than the divine. The demonic represents something entirely distinct, and by comprehending it, one can attain enlightenment and become a Buddha" (Malyavin V. V. *Twilight of Tao*. p. 149).

DOI: 10.36340/2071-6818-2023-19-3-22-38

e-mail: 330507761@qq.com

ORCID: 0009-0005-6675-1960

Аннотация:

Ключевые слова: анимация, литература, «Путешествие на Запад», буддизм, миф, фольклор, китайский менталитет, фантазия, символ, утопия, философия, парадоксальность, условность.

Как складывался роман

« (1895-1970), » (1928) « » (1946)¹³, (1929-2007), (1874-1945), « » (1941) « » (2015). 80 15 () 3D- ()

13. Academia, 1928 []. : http://feb-web.ru/feb/skazki/critics/pms/pms-001-.htm (27.02.2023); , 2000.

14. // , 1978. . 141-142.

()¹⁶. « » 15. « » 100 () (). « » 16. (). , 1983. « » (. 149).

15. : Athes H. Baudrillard, Sepultura and Steve Cutts' Animation. Dystopian Common Ground // Hermeneia: Journal of Hermeneutics, Art Theory & Criticism. 2019. N. 22. P. 173-180. URL: http://hermeneia.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/14_Athes.pdf (24.02.2023).

16. (). , 1983. « » (. 149).

