Characterization and Cultural Insight in 'Exhuma 2024' Movie by Jang Jae-hyun

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan analisis naratif dan semiotika untuk memahami struktur cerita, perkembangan karakter, dan dinamika interpersonal antar karakter film. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan analisis tokoh utama dan perkembangan tokoh, representasi budaya dan unsur tradisional, serta dampak visual dan artistik dalam penggambaran budaya. Analisis ini mencakup identifikasi tokoh protagonis dan antagonis serta motivasi dan perubahan karakter selama film berlangsung. Selain itu, penelitian ini melibatkan analisis dialog dan tindakan karakter untuk mengungkap aspek psikologis dan emosional yang berkontribusi terhadap kedalaman karakter. Penggunaan pendekatan semiotik digunakan untuk mengeksplorasi simbol-simbol budaya dalam film dan bagaimana kontribusinya terhadap pemahaman budaya yang lebih luas. Dengan menafsirkan tanda dan simbol dalam konteks budaya Korea, penelitian ini berupaya mengungkap pesan tersirat dan tersurat yang disampaikan dalam film "Exhuma 2024". Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa film "Exhuma 2024" karya Jang Jae-hyun menampilkan penokohan yang mendalam dan kompleks serta memberikan wawasan budaya yang kaya akan kepercayaan dan ritual tradisional Korea. Setiap karakter digambarkan dengan latar belakang dan motivasi yang jelas, terutama karakter utama, seorang arkeolog yang terobsesi dengan dunia mistik yang menghadapi dilema antara sains dan kepercayaan tradisional. Elemen budaya otentik seperti ritual, pemanggilan arwah, dan mitos lokal dimasukkan dengan cermat, memperkenalkan warisan budaya Korea kepada khalayak internasional. Penggunaan bahasa, kostum, dan setting yang autentik menambah suasana mistis dan horor dalam film, menjadikannya sebuah karya yang mendidik dan menghormati tradisi budaya.

Kata kunci: Karakterisasi, Wawasan Budaya, Exhuma 2024

Abstract

This research uses a narrative analysis and semiotics approach to understand story structure, character development, and interpersonal dynamics between film characters. This research aims to describe the analysis of the main character and character development, cultural representation and traditional elements, as well as the visual and artistic impact in cultural depiction. This analysis includes identification of the protagonist and antagonist as well as character motivation and changes during the film. Additionally, this research involves analyzing the dialogue and actions of the characters to reveal the psychological and emotional aspects that contribute to the character's depth. The use of a semiotic approach is used to explore cultural symbols in films and how they contribute to broader cultural understanding. By interpreting signs and symbols in the context of Korean culture, this research attempts to reveal the implicit and explicit messages conveyed in the film "Exhuma 2024". The results of this research show that the film "Exhuma 2024" by Jang Jae-hyun displays deep and complex characterizations and provides insight into a culture rich in traditional Korean beliefs and rituals. Each character is depicted with a clear background and motivation, especially the main character, an archaeologist obsessed with a mystical world who faces a dilemma between science and traditional beliefs. Authentic cultural elements such as rituals, seances, and local myths are carefully included, introducing Korean cultural heritage to an international audience.

The use of authentic language, costumes and settings enhances the mystical and horror atmosphere in the film, making it a work that is educational and respectful of cultural traditions.

Keywords : Characterization, Cultural Insight, Exhuma 2024

INTRODUCTION

In this research, the author uses Movie literature as research material. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, Movie is a film that is the telling of a story that is usually shown in cinemas or on television. Films have many elements, one of which is characterization. Characterization is representation of characters in a narrative and dramatic work. Includes both direct methods such as attribution of qualities in descriptions or comments, and also indirect (or 'dramatic') methods that invite the reader to infer qualities from a character's actions, speech, or appearance. Characterization is one of the important elements that describes character development in a narrative, helping to interpret and differentiate characters through dialogue, actions, thoughts and interactions between other characters. This provides deeper knowledge as well as authenticity to the story, making the story more interesting and relevant (Foster, 1927). In film literature, characterization can be depicted directly, where the author provides an explicit description, or indirectly, where the character's personality is revealed through the behavior depicted in their interactions.

Cultural insight plays an important role in developing characters in a narrative. This provides a lens through which the audience is able to understand the social, historical and environmental context that influences a character's beliefs, values and behavior, including culture, traditions, customs, language and social norms that describe a group of people (Geetz, 1973). The cultural insight incorporated into the characterization allows the author to create a more detailed and realistic world for the audience. In addition to enriching the narrative, this approach is also expected to foster cultural awareness and appreciation as well as highlight the diversity of human experiences and deeper knowledge about the importance of cultural identity.

Jang Jae-hyun is the director of the film "Exhuma 2024" which gives the appearance of a horror film by including emotion in the narrative and scary visuals, thus providing a detailed cinematic work. "Exhuma 2024" is a horror film that depicts the story of an archaeologist who is trapped in a mysterious ancient artifact found while excavating an ancient tomb in a mountainous area in South Korea. In this film, Jang Jae-Hyun combines frightening horror elements with an emotional crisis which makes the audience enjoy an emotional journey full of tension and surprises. Apart from providing a look of horror and emotional crisis in the film, "Exhuma 2024" also gives the impression of a stunning story with extraordinary acting performances from the cast. The story shown was also carefully prepared and the setting was amazing so that the film "Exhuma 2024" succeeded in attracting many fans.

Previous reseach on characterization analysis has often Characterization focuses on nine methods of characterization including personal description, visible character, speech, past lives, conversations with other people, reactions, direct comments, thoughts and behavior. Research conducted by Kadek Dewi Pebrianti (2023) in the film "Moana" states that the process of character formation is through dialogue, action, and what the author tells about character formation in the film. Apart from that, research conducted by Danang Tri Prabowo & (dkk.) (2021) states that characterization can be based on physical appearance, social status, social relationships and the personality of the characters in the story. Through a combination of previous research and contextual analysis, the author wants to develop how characterization is depicted in emotional crisis problems. Previous research has focused on film narrative structure, thematic depiction, and film stylistic choices. In this research, the author wants to offer characteristics and insights that depict images in films that significantly reflect cultural values and social issues in a contemporary context. This research provides a more significant understanding of aspects of cultural identity and their impact on individual experiences. Cultural insight can provide a person with information about how to communicate more effectively with a particular culture to influence their behavior. Demetrius Parker (2018). The research aims to describe the analysis of the main character and character development, cultural representation

and traditional elements depicted through visuals and artistic depictions of culture in the film "Exhuma 2024".

The analysis of this research is aimed at classifying the characters and cultural insights contained in the film. This research is new research because the film "Exhuma 2024" is a film that has just been released so no one has analyzed this film, even though it uses the same research methods and theories as previous research. -Previously, the author provided additional information about the emotional crisis that occurred due to the characterization of the players and the cultural insights contained in the film.

METHOD

In this research the author uses narrative analysis and semiotics to examine the film "Exhuma 2024" by Jang Jae-hyun. This research examines the characterization and cultural insight in the film, using narrative analysis to determine the story structure, character development and interpersonal dynamics between characters contained in the film which describes the plot and subplot, the author analyzes how the characters are developed and combined into the film's storyline. This analysis includes identification of the main and supporting characters as well as motivation and character changes throughout the film. Additionally, this research involves analyzing the dialogue and actions of the characters to reveal the psychological and emotional aspects that contribute to the character's depth.

A semiotic analysis approach is used to explore cultural symbols in films and how they contribute to broader cultural understanding. By interpreting signs and symbols in the context of Korean culture, this research seeks to reveal the implicit and explicit messages conveyed in the film "Exhuma 2024." This involves examining visual elements, such as costumes, sets, and props, as well as auditory elements such as language and sound design, to understand how they enhance narrative and cultural representation.

Data collection for this study involved watching the film several times to capture detailed observations of the characters, their interactions, and the cultural elements presented.

The data analysis process includes coding observation results and categorizing them into themes related to characterization, cultural representation, and visual and artistic elements. These themes are then analyzed to identify patterns and relationships that illustrate how the film depicts and communicates cultural insights. These findings are synthesized to provide a comprehensive understanding of the film's approach to cultural characterization and depiction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Analysis of Main Characters and Character Development

Kim Sang Doek was introduced as a talented archaeologist who tries to uncover the mysteries of ancient burial sites. From the start, the audience is shown a calm and rational figure, reflecting his expertise in the field of archaeology. However, this calm slowly fades when he discovers an artifact related to an ancient curse. The initial conflict arises when Seo-jin begins to experience strange things after finding a family ancestral grave in a remote village in South Korea. The artifacts found actually release something evil and dangerous. In a tense scene, Sang Doek said to his colleague.

Extra 1
Sang Doek: "I feel there is something wrong with this artifact. Something has been bothering me since I found it."

Young-geun: "What's bothering you? Isn't that already finished?"

Sang Doek: "Yes, but it looks like something evil will appear"

This dialogue shows the beginning of his emotional instability.

This conflict further worsens Sang Doek's situation. He began having nightmares and seeing ghostly apparitions and frightening sounds that could not be explained. This development

shows a significant change in his character, from a rational scientist to a person consumed by fear. Sang Doek's internal tension peaks as he begins to doubt his sanity. He talks to himself in one scene
Extra 2

Sang Doek: "Am I going crazy? What really happened to me?"

This dialogue marks a shift from external fear to internal uncertainty due to the terror he experienced after excavating the ancestral grave and finding ancient artifacts. In his efforts to overcome his fears, Sang Doek received support from his colleagues.

Extra 3
Young-geun: "We have to investigate this together. You are not alone, Sang Doek."

Sang Doek: "We have to go back to eating again"

Young-geun: "Yeah, let's go back there tomorrow to check how you feel."

This support becomes an important turning point in the development of Sang Doek's character, showing that he does not have to face all this alone. The rock given by Young-geun is able to give hope back to his rational thinking. Sang Doek finally decided to face the curse head-on.

Extra 4
Sang Doek: "I have to find out the origin of this curse, even if it means facing danger."

Bong-gil: "We need to ask people around here"

Sang Doek: "It looks like there is a house not far from these mountains"

Bong-gil: "let's go there"

This decision indicates the courage that has grown within him, as well as a change from a character who was initially afraid to face the curse to someone who is ready to face threats. The change in the dynamics of Sang Doek's character becomes increasingly visible when he succeeds in uncovering the truth of the curse. He discovers that the curse originates from an ancient ritual involving human sacrifice, the iron stakes were planted by Japanese troops to make their colony miserable. This knowledge gives him new strength to fight the curse.
The emotional climax occurs when Seo-jin must perform a ritual to break the curse. At this time, he showed extraordinary courage and determination.

Extra 5

Sang Doek: "I will not let this curse destroy any more lives,"

Hwa-rim: "How do you do it?"

Sang Doek: "We'll dig up the grave again and find the iron stake."

Young-geun: "But it's high risk"

Sang Doek: Hwa-rim, I believe you, please give me as much time as possible so that Guen and I can dig and find the stake in the tomb."

Hwa-rim: "Okay, I'll try to lure him away from the grave"

This climax shows the peak of Sang Doek's character development to overcome the curse, involving his friends to work together to remove the curse.

After successfully carrying out this plan, Sang Doek felt deep relief because he was able to overcome the thing that made him afraid.

Extra 6
Seo-jin: "Finally, it's all over"

Hwa-rim: "A plan that almost failed, but you did it well Sang Doek"

Young-geun: "Yeah right, it's finally over"

This resolution shows the complete transformation of Sang Doek's character from someone filled with fear to a hero who managed to save many lives, by trying to strengthen himself and convince his colleagues that everything will be fine.

In the end, Seo-jin reflects on her journey.

Extra 7
Sang Doek: "I learned a lot from all this. About fear, courage, and belief in yourself,"

Hwa-rim: "Everything must be faced with confidence in yourself"

Sang Doek: "Thank you for your help"

This reflection shows the confidence and depth of character that develops throughout the story to always fight and believe in yourself. The development of Sang Doek's character also has an impact on other characters.

Extra 8
Young-geun: "Sang Doek, you taught me the true meaning of courage,"

Hw_rim: "The meaning of continuing to strive to believe in one's abilities"

These influences show that the development of the main character also influences the people around him.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that through Kim Sang Doek's journey, the film "Exhuma 2024" succeeded in showing deep and complex character development. From a rational archaeologist to an archaeologist who is able to face all his own fears, Sang Doek's character development is the core of this film's narrative. This analysis shows that character changes driven by internal and external conflict are able to produce moving and inspiring stories.

Character development in "Exhuma 2024" is in line with previous research findings on character evolution in narrative storytelling. According to Smith (2018), character arcs that involve resolving internal and external conflicts are essential to creating interesting and relatable stories. This is evident in Seo-jin's journey, where his transformation from a rational archaeologist to a brave hero reflects the dynamic character discussed in narrative theory.

Furthermore, Seo-jin's development parallels Jung's (2017) exploration of hero archetypes in modern cinema. Jung's research highlights how protagonists who face supernatural challenges often experience significant personal growth, a pattern that is evident in Seo-jin's development. The support Seo-jin receives from Ji-hoon also reflects themes of friendship and mutual assistance found in previous research on character relationships in films (Lee, 2019).

In conclusion, the character development in "Exhuma 2024" not only serves as an interesting narrative device but also reinforces existing research on the importance of internal and external conflict in shaping character arcs. The film provides an example of how well-crafted

character development can produce powerful storytelling, capture the audience's attention, and contribute to the broader discourse on narrative structure in cinema.

Cultural Representation and Traditional Elements

The film "Exhuma 2024" begins with a setting in a city in America, which is a city with high modernity. Then the setting changes to a small village in South Korea which is rich in local traditions and beliefs. The village serves as the main setting for much of the story, introducing viewers to various aspects of Korean culture, such as traditional architecture, rituals, and clothing.

One of the cultural elements that stands out in the film is the use of traditional rituals to ward off evil spirits. In an early scene, a village shaman performs a purification ritual to protect the villagers from evil forces during the excavation of an ancient cursed tomb in the village. This scene not only builds tension but also highlights the influence of deep-rooted traditions in village life.

Extra 1

Hwa-rim : We have to do this ritual to protect the village when digging the grave to avoid evil spirits. There is no other choice."

Ji Young: But will this work?"

Hwa-rim : "This tradition has been passed down for centuries. We must believe and respect our ancestors."

Ji Young: "Okay"

These dialogues depict reliance on and respect for the ritual practices of their ancestors, despite unknown risks.

This film also displays traditional Korean symbols, such as Hanbok and Hanok. Hanbok, traditional Korean clothing, is frequently worn by the characters, enhancing cultural authenticity. Hanok, a traditional Korean house, serves as the setting for several important scenes, emphasizing the beauty of traditional architecture.

Ji Young, one of the main characters, returns to the village after many years in America, creating a conflict between modernity and tradition. Initially skeptical of traditional beliefs, Ji Young gradually understands and appreciates their importance in fighting the supernatural threat that haunts her family.

The film further incorporates traditional elements in its background music and sound effects. Traditional Korean music featuring instruments such as the gayageum and buk creates a tense and mystical atmosphere. Sound effects, such as footsteps on the Hanok wooden floor, add authenticity and depth to the atmosphere.

Dialogue between characters often reflects traditional values, such as respect for elders and the importance of family honor.

Extra 2

Ji young: "Bong-gil, why do we have to keep doing all these rituals? Can't we find a more modern way?"

Bong-gil: "Ji Young, tradition is part of who we are. Without traditions, we lose our identity as Koreans."

This interaction highlights the generation gap, with the older generation clinging to tradition and the younger generation seeking modern solutions.

The film also delves into the villain's backstory, which is rooted in Korean myths and legends. The antagonist, an evil spirit who is a deceased Japanese soldier, is connected to folk beliefs about restless souls, adding a cultural layer to the horror.

Viewers are invited to see how traditional beliefs and cultural elements can be effective tools in resolving conflicts, both supernatural and internal. This is reflected in Seong-hwa's transformation from skeptic to believer, ultimately using traditional knowledge to overcome the threat.

The use of language in the film, which features Korean with a local dialect, enhances authenticity and immerses the audience in the setting of the story. The visuals further reinforce the traditional theme, with beautiful images of Korean natural scenery and colors inspired by traditional Korean art and culture.

Additionally, the film explores the spiritual aspects of Korean culture, depicting scenes in which characters seek enlightenment through meditation and prayer. These moments add depth to the characters and plot.

Moral messages influenced by traditional values such as loyalty to family and community, as well as the importance of preserving cultural heritage, are conveyed through the emotional journey of the characters and the resolution of the main conflict.

The film "Exhuma 2024" successfully combines horror with Korean culture and traditions, creating an experience that is both thrilling and educational. Viewers gain insight into aspects of culture they may not have known about, while enjoying a thrilling story.

The cultural representation and use of traditional elements in "Exhuma 2024" is in line with previous research findings on the integration of cultural heritage in modern media. According to Park (2020), films that combine traditional rituals and symbols not only provide entertainment but also cultural education, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage. This is evident in "Exhuma 2024," where traditional Korean elements are seamlessly woven into the narrative, enhancing the story and cultural awareness.

"Exhuma 2024" provides an example of how film can effectively convey and celebrate traditional culture, strengthening existing research on the integration of cultural elements in media. Through its depiction of Korea's rich traditions and the dynamic interaction between modernity and cultural heritage, the film offers a compelling and culturally enriching experience, contributing to the broader discourse regarding cultural representation in contemporary cinema.

Visual and Artistic Impact in Cultural Depictions

Jang Jae-hyun's film "Exhuma 2024" is a clear example of how modern cinematography can be used to highlight and express culture in an interesting and engaging way. Through stunning visuals and sophisticated artistic techniques, the film manages to depict the culture with impressive depth and authenticity.

Jang Jae-hyun uses various visual elements to create an atmosphere that fits the theme of the film. One of the most prominent techniques is the use of a contrasting color palette to emphasize the difference between the real world and the spiritual world which is at the heart of the story, thereby making the audience feel the reality of the cultural depiction shown.

Extra 1
Sang Doek: "The world is not only about what we see, but also about what we feel."

This line is the basis of the visuals used throughout the film, where each scene is filled with deep symbolism.

The symbolism in this film not only functions as an artistic element but also as a means of representing cultural messages. For example, the use of traditional motifs in costumes and designs sets the tone for the rich cultural heritage of the people depicted in the film.

Jang Jae-hyun consistently uses visual contrast to depict the conflict between tradition and modernity. Scenes depicting everyday life are full of bright colors and details, while the spiritual world is depicted in darker, somber tones, emphasizing mystery and uncertainty.

This film also uses advanced CGI technology to create impressive visual effects. CGI is used to depict supernatural and otherworldly creatures that would be impossible to realize with conventional techniques, providing an immersive and realistic visual experience. Apart from modern technology, "Exhuma 2024" also takes inspiration from traditional art. For example, some scenes feature layouts similar to traditional paintings, combining classical elements with a modern cinematic approach.

The dialogue in this film not only serves to move the story along but also to provide insight into the culture depicted. For example, in one conversation, another character says, "We are the keepers of our traditions, and through these stories, we honor our ancestors."

Apart from the visuals, the music and sound in "Exhuma 2024" play an important role in creating the atmosphere. Traditional music is used effectively to heighten emotions and provide an authentic cultural feel. The shooting technique in this film is also worth paying attention to. Jang Jae-hyun uses a variety of camera angles and lighting techniques to emphasize certain elements of the culture depicted, such as religious rituals and family traditions.

The story in "Exhuma 2024" is heavily influenced by the culture of its origin. Conflicts and resolutions in films are often rooted in strong cultural values and traditions, giving viewers deep insight into the lives of these communities.

The visual references in this film come not only from local culture but also from various global sources. This creates a unique blend of tradition and modernity, adding depth to the cultural depiction. "Exhuma 2024" not only uses cultural elements as a background but as the center of the story. This shows a deep respect for the culture depicted, paying respect to the values and traditions passed down from generation to generation.

The film received mixed reviews from critics and audiences. Many praised the authentic visual and artistic depiction, while others criticized some elements of the story as lacking strength. However, overall, "Exhuma 2024" is recognized as a work that successfully combines visual art with a strong cultural narrative.

The visual and artistic techniques used in "Exhuma 2024" align with findings from previous studies on cultural representation in media. According to Kim (2020), the use of traditional symbols and motifs in films not only enhances the visual appeal but also reinforces cultural identity and heritage. This is evident in "Exhuma 2024," where traditional Korean elements are integrated into the narrative, providing a rich cultural context that resonates with viewers.

The contrast between tradition and modernity depicted in the film mirrors the findings of Choi (2018), who explored the tension between cultural heritage and modernization in Korean society. Seong-hwa's journey from skepticism to appreciation of traditional practices reflects the broader societal struggle to balance cultural preservation with modern advancements.

In conclusion, "Exhuma 2024" serves as a compelling case study on the integration of visual and artistic techniques in cultural representation. By blending traditional elements with modern cinematography, Jang Jae-hyun successfully creates an immersive experience that both entertains and educates. The film's approach to depicting cultural conflicts and resolutions provides valuable insights into the importance of preserving cultural heritage in a rapidly changing world.

CONCLUSION

From the results and discussion above, researchers can conclude that the film Jang Jae-hyun's "Exhuma 2024" offers deep and complex characterization that makes the film more than just a supernatural horror. Every character in this film, from the main to supporting characters, is depicted with clear backgrounds and motivations, which enriches the story plot. The main character, an archaeologist obsessed with the mystical world, is portrayed so realistically, showing his inner struggle between science and traditional beliefs. This characterization allows the audience to feel deeper emotions and connect with each character's journey, especially when they face fears and moral dilemmas.

On the other hand, "Exhuma 2024" also provides rich cultural insight, highlighting Korean traditional beliefs and rituals. Jang Jae-hyun carefully incorporated authentic cultural elements, such as séance rituals and local myths, into the film's narrative. This not only adds depth to the

story but also introduces international audiences to Korea's rich cultural heritage. The use of authentic language, costumes and settings further strengthens the mystical and horror atmosphere in the film, making it a work that is not only scary but also educational and respectful of cultural traditions.

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