

Prototype Study of Sun Wukong's Image on Cultural Interpretation of Collective Unconsciousness

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ABSTRACT

Sun Wukong is a main figure in *Journey to the West*, which embodies Jung's rebel archetype. By comparing with the images of rebels such as Prometheus, Satan and Nezha, this paper explores the commonalities of rebel archetypes in different cultures, especially the desire for freedom and independence, and reveals the psychological characteristics of human collective unconsciousness and the different understandings of the relationship between individual and collective. The article first analyzes the commonalities between Sun Wukong and other rebel images, and reveals the core characteristics of the rebel prototype. Secondly, it compares the similarities and differences of these images from a cross-cultural perspective, and explores the different national psychology and social significance behind the rebel prototype. Finally, the collective unconscious foundation of the rebel prototype is discussed in depth, and its cultural and psychological needs in modern society are analyzed. This study provides a new perspective for the interpretation of classical literature and the study of universal psychological models.

Keywords: *Sun Wukong, Monkey King, Archetype theory, Collective unconsciousness, Rebel.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The "prototype" is the common structure and form in the human mind, which has an impact on our way of thinking and behavior. Jung claims that the prototype is a heritable psychological structure that exists in the collective unconscious. The archetype plays an important role in religion and mythology, and is the source of various symbols. As an important role in the ancient Chinese literary classic "Journey to the West," Sun Wukong insightfully reflects the tension between collective consciousness and individual spirit in Chinese traditional culture. It is a representative of the rebel prototype and has the universality beyond time and space. However, the current research focuses more on its literary analysis and religious symbolic significance in the text, and there are few attempts to carry out cross-cultural prototype research from the perspective of collective unconsciousness. Additionally, other roles in Eastern and Western cultures, such as Prometheus in the West, Satan and Nezha in China, can find the rebellious spirit in

common with Sun Wukong, and they manifest the common prototype, the rebel prototype. Behind these images, the common psychological needs of human beings are hidden, which embodies the profound connotation of collective unconsciousness in Jung's prototype theory.

Through the archetypal analysis of Sun Wukong's image, this study attempts to explore how this role is compared with the images of rebels such as Nezha, Satan and Prometheus, to reveal the common rebel archetype behind it, and to investigate the psychological basis of this archetype in human collective unconsciousness and its significance to contemporary society. This study aims to expand our understanding of the Sun Wukong figure, provoke reflection on the relationship between the individual and the collective, and highlight the importance of the rebellious spirit in addressing oppressive social realities. The core of the study is to present the interweaving and conflict between Eastern and Western cultures through the interpretation of the archetypes of rebels in different cultures, and to

explain the practical significance of the rebel spirit in contemporary society.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of the image of Sun Wukong has long been a prominent topic in academia, encompassing fields such as literature, religion, and communication, demonstrating significant academic value. As a classic literary and artistic image, its connotation and value can continually be explored and discovered as the times develop. At present, academic research on Sun Wukong's image mainly focuses on three aspects. The prototype and source of Sun Wukong's image, the interpretation of the connotation of its image, and the shaping of Sun Wukong's image from a cross-cultural viewpoint.

2.1 *The Prototype and Source of Sun Wukong's Image*

Since the early 20th century, the origins of Sun Wukong's image have been explored through various interpretative approaches. The Native Theory claims that the image of Sun Wukong originated from ancient Chinese mythology and folklore. Some believe that the image of Sun Wukong was influenced by the Wuzhiqi Water Monster in ancient Chinese mythology (Lu, 1980). The Foreign Theory argues that Sun Wukong's prototype was influenced by Hanuman, the monkey god in the Indian epic *Ramayana* (Hu, 1989). Ji (1979), Chen Shaoqun (1978) and others also support this theory. They believe that some of Sun Wukong's characteristics were strikingly similar to those of Hanuman, reflecting the influence of cultural exchanges. By comprehensively integrating these two theories, the academic community has progressively developed the Mixed Theory. It is widely recognized that the image of Sun Wukong has both the foundation of local culture and elements of foreign culture, forming a pluralistic and unified artistic model (Xiao, 1996). It is evident that the image of Sun Wukong is influenced by both indigenous and foreign cultures, while also containing a factor of innovation.

2.2 *Interpretation of Sun Wukong's Image Connotation*

Sun Wukong's image carries profound cultural, philosophical and religious significance, blending elements of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism, and embodies the unity of animality, humanity and

divinity. The image of the Monkey King is deeply rooted in Chinese culture, with Confucianism as its foundation, Taoism as its content, and Buddhism as its form (Qin, 2008). Sun Wukong's rebellious character and challenge to the authority of heaven are regarded as a criticism of the injustice of feudal society and show the individual's desire for freedom and equality (Ning, 2008). The interpretation of Sun Wukong's image from an international perspective differs from that in China. Western scholars tend to examine the similarities and differences between Sun Wukong and heroes in Western mythology from the view of mythology and literary criticism. Sun Wukong is portrayed as a character with intense inner conflict embodying dual sides, embodying dual aspects—both devilish characteristics and Buddha nature (Lai, 1998). In the context of globalization, the image of Sun Wukong has been reinterpreted and adapted by different cultures. This cross-cultural communication sometimes leads to misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the original image. For instance, Western scholars may emphasize Sun Wukong's personal heroism while overlooking his collectivism and social responsibility within Chinese traditional culture.

2.3 *Changes and Development of Sun Wukong's Image*

Research into the evolution of Sun Wukong's image explores how his portrayal has developed over time, with shifts in cultural connotations and symbolic meanings in response to changes in social and cultural contexts. Studying the transformation of Sun Wukong's image provides valuable insights into the cultural background, ideologies, and the evolving psychology of audiences across different historical periods (Fan, 2019). In addition, some scholars have focused on how Sun Wukong's image has changed during the process of cross-cultural literary migration. They examine how the interaction and transformation of diverse cultures, driven by changes in cultural contexts, have reimagined the Chinese Monkey King as the American Monkey King — a trickster figure symbolizing the cultural demands of American's minority groups (Yang, 2019). Other studies focus on the parody of Sun Wukong's image in modern culture (He, 2017; Fang, 2004; Gao, 2015). However, research specifically addressing these changes in the context of the new era is relatively limited.

In summary, although domestic and international academic circles have extensively studied on the image of Sun Wukong, there are still numerous deficiencies. From a literary perspective, the study of Sun Wukong's image mostly adopts traditional literary analysis and cultural interpretation methods. Although these methods reveal the image characteristics and cultural connotation of Sun Wukong to a certain extent, they often lack the interdisciplinary cross-cultural research approach and the application of literary theory analysis. By analyzing the image of Sun Wukong through cross-cultural research methods and Jung's archetype theory, and situating it within the mythical domain of the collective unconscious to explore its archetypal significance, we are able to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural commonalities and universal values behind the image of Sun Wukong, thereby revealing the shared elements within the collective unconscious of humanity.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Jung's theory of the collective unconscious describes a shared psychological framework inherited across generations, independent of individual experience and rooted in the primitive legacy of humanity. The prototype, as a form of collective unconsciousness, is a universal and innate thinking tendency and behavior pattern, which is often reflected in myths and works of art, and related to original images. Frye redefined the prototype, emphasizing that any recurring image can be called "prototype", and believed that the origin of literature can be traced back to myths, which contain the core forms and themes of the development of later literature. In addition, Fraser discusses the ideological evolution of witchcraft, religion and science in *The Golden Bough*, reveals the traces of religion and witchcraft in literature and art, and lays a theoretical foundation for archetypal criticism. The archetype is a universal concept across culture and times. It points out the commonality of human psychological essence in varied cultures. Through archetypal criticism, we can explore the repeated themes and images in literary works from the field of collective unconscious mythology.

Cross-cultural research has gradually become an important tool to understand the dissemination and acceptance of literary images. Archetype theory itself possesses cross-cultural characteristics. Therefore, combining cross-cultural research

methods with the approach of archetype theory allows us to span time vertically and cross space horizontally, placing the typical characters in literary works within a time and space that transcend historical and ethnic boundaries, and exploring the collective unconscious of humanity that they collectively embody.

As a cross-era cultural symbol, Sun Wukong reflects the activation and remodeling of the prototype in the collective unconscious. This interweaving of cross-cultural and archetypal theories provides a new path for us to explore the cultural connotation and multi-dimensional meaningfulness behind literary images, as well as the common psychological experience of human beings.

4. FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to deeply analyze the embodiment of the rebel archetype in Chinese and Western cultures, especially through the four classic images of Sun Wukong, Nezha, Satan and Prometheus to explore their commonalities and differences. The selection of these characters is intentional. In their respective cultural contexts, they not only bear the expression of rebel archetypes, but also jointly reflect the reaction mechanism and psychological process of human beings in the face of injustice and oppression. As highlighted in the literature review, existing research on the image of Sun Wukong from the perspective of interdisciplinary and cross-cultural research remain limited in both breadth and depth, particularly within the multi-dimensional analysis of the image of rebels in the cross-cultural context. Therefore, this paper presents the commonality and cross-cultural significance of this prototype through the starting point, process and inner changes of Sun Wukong's rebellious behavior, combined with the image of rebels in the other three cultural backgrounds, and further expand the application of prototype theory. The analysis of this part is carried out through the following three dimensions.

4.1 Analysis of the Commonness of the Rebel Prototypes

As one of the prototypes of Jung's prototype theory, the rebel prototype reflects the common aspirations and conflicts within the depths of human psychology. Rebels are usually challengers to authority and tradition, symbolizing the individual's desire for freedom and self-realization.

In Chinese classical literature, Sun Wukong, as the main role of *Journey to the West*, embodies this prototype. Through the analysis of the image of Sun Wukong, combined with the image of rebels in other cultural backgrounds such as Nezha, Satan and Prometheus, we can reveal how these characters show the spirit of rebellion and their common characteristics in their respective cultures.

Rebels include the awakening of independent consciousness, a dissatisfaction with authority, and a desire to seek self-definition. In the fourth chapter, dissatisfied with being appointed as the Protector of the Horses and deeming the position too low, Sun Wukong returned to Huaguo Mountain and proclaimed himself the "Monkey King". "Make me a banner immediately, and inscribe on it in large letters, 'The Great Sage, Equal to Heaven.' Erect a pole to hang it on. From now on, address me only as the Great Sage, Equal to Heaven, and the title Great King will no longer be permitted. The Monster Kings of the various caves will also be informed so that it will be known to all." (Wu, 2012, p.151). Through a series of heroic acts, Sun Wukong secures his identity and status, demonstrating his unwillingness to await external recognition and his proactive stance in asserting his position. This initial act of rebellion against traditional authority underscores his determination to control his own destiny, further evidenced by his removal of his name from the book of life and death and his resistance against Tathagata Buddha. Nezha's unique personality does not conform to the traditional role expectations, he was unpleasant with the Dragon King's son Ao Bing's nuisance, directly killed him. Such behaviour illustrates his disregard for the Dragon King's authority, as he prioritizes his intrinsic sense of righteousness and commitment to protecting the world. Nezha does not want to be bound.

The rebels have the courage to resist injustice and challenge authority. In the Peach Garden, Sun Wukong learned that he was not in the invitation list of the Grand Peach Festival, and said: "I am the Great Sage, Equal to Heaven. Why shouldn't I, old Monkey, be made an honored guest at the party?" (Wu, 2012, p.164). In the face of the contempt and unfair treatment of heaven, Sun Wukong never reduced his self-identity, but obtained equal status with other gods through his own actions, which reflected his affirmation of his ability and value. Realizing that the position of Protector of the Horses is of low status, Sun Wukong resolutely renounces it and returned to Huaguo Mountain to be a self-appointed king, highlighting his strong

subjectivity and a high sense of personal worth. Prometheus also expressed dissatisfaction with Zeus's unfair treatment of not letting human beings have fire and living in darkness and ignorance. "I will never, cowering before his dire threats, divulge this secret, until he releases me from my cruel bonds and provides compensation for this outrage." (Aeschylus, 1926). He had the courage to bear the anger and punishment of Zeus and strive for light and hope for mankind.

The rebel archetype embodies duality. Rebels are typically characterized by more than just resistance; their image also involves deep inner struggle and a transformation of self-awareness, often accompanied by a steadfast commitment to their own beliefs. Sun Wukong was suppressed under the Five Elements Mountain and experienced a long period of loneliness and reflection. "Now I know the meaning of penitence, so I entreat the Great Compassion to show me the proper path, for I am willing to practice cultivation." (Wu, 2012) Sun Wukong's repentance is not a complete self-blame, but a short compromise to obtain freedom. Similarly, after Prometheus was punished by Zeus, he reflected on his behavior. Despite the pain, he firmly believed that it was worth giving human beings fire. "Yes, I caused mortals to cease foreseeing their doom." (Aeschylus, 1926) "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven" (Milton, 2009). After Satan was expelled, he still adhered to his faith, continued to resist the authority of God, and became a symbol of free will. After being reborn, Nezha did not retaliate against the resentment of his parents and villagers who did not understand him, but insisted on justice and mission, and continued to protect his home after becoming stronger.

The actions of the rebels are often accompanied by sacrifices and costs, thus showing a noble and tragic, leaving a valuable spiritual heritage for future generations. In the *Journey to the West*, Sun Wukong rebelled against the authority of the heavenly court by making a riot in the Heavenly Palace. Although he finally gained freedom in a certain sense, he also paid a heavy price - being pressed by the Buddha in the Five Elements Mountain for five hundred years. To leave the Five Elements Mountain and regain freedom, he promised the arrangement of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva to escort the Tang monk to take the scriptures, so he was put on a tight spell. Sun Wukong's story reveals that the rebels usually pay a great price for ideals and freedom, but these characters often experience inner struggle and

reflection, and finally adhere to their faith in freedom. After five hundred years under the pressure of the Buddha, Sun Wukong never gave up his desire for freedom although he was physically bound. His repentance during this period was not a real self-denial, but to get temporary relief and freedom, and his rebellious spirit was still not extinguished. Similarly, although Prometheus was punished by Zeus and suffered long-term torture, he still insisted on his belief that his act of fighting for human freedom was worth it.

Rebel actions are often accompanied by tragedy, but their courage, belief and persistence have become the spiritual heritage of later generations. Through resistance and sacrifice, they show their deep pursuit of freedom, and also inspire generations of people to think about justice and personal dignity. As a common cultural phenomenon, Sun Wukong, Nezha, Satan and Prometheus employed the archetypal model of rebels' archetypal awakening and dissatisfaction, resistance and challenge, punishment and growth, sacrifice and influence. Under different cultural backgrounds, the rebel prototype has always been shining with the glory of brave pursuit of freedom and self-realization and has become an important link between different cultures.

4.2 Cross-cultural Comparison of Rebel Archetypes

The archetype of the rebel, though exhibiting distinct characteristics in different cultures, universally embodies humanity's common desire for freedom, individual liberation, and resistance against oppression. They not only challenge established authority, but also symbolize a profound exploration of the relationship between the individual and the collective.

Sun Wukong's uproar in the Temple of Heaven directly challenges its authority and hierarchy, highlighting the stark conflict between individual freedom and theocracy. In contrast, Nezha explores his own path by opposing his father's arrangement and rebels in the divine world; Satan refused to obey God's arrangement, and his rebellion shook the traditional religious structure. These roles represent the conflict between the individual and the collective, as well as the desire for free will.

However, the understanding of the rebel archetype varies from culture to culture, and the differences are mainly reflected in the purpose of individual freedom, the form of rebellion and the

relationship with the collective. Taking Sun Wukong and Satan as examples, both are renowned for challenging authority. However, Sun Wukong's rebellion ultimately symbolizes an awakening rooted in collective responsibility, while Satan's rebellion emphasizes the rejection of absolute authority, leading to isolation and degeneration. This contrast indicates the significance of individual free will in Western culture. This emphasis is closely related to the values of individualism in Western culture. In Sun Wukong's image, his rebellious spirit is more a struggle against injustice, and his image integrates Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. His unruly nature is consistent with the natural philosophy of Taoism. In the journey to the west, Sun Wukong always adhered to the belief in the face of difficulties, showing the collectivism spirit of Confucianism. Through self-discipline and adaptation, he showed the character of courage and justice.

Sun Wukong's story focuses on the balance between individual heroism and collective goals. In the process of protecting the Tang monk, he manifests the loyalty and sacrifice spirit of the collective goal. Satan symbolizes the confrontation between individual and authority, and the spirit of pursuing freedom and equality. Sun Wukong's collectivism spirit focuses on the coordination of individual responsibility and collective goal. This difference underscores the contrasting values of individual and collective, freedom and authority between China and the West.

Geert Hofstede's cultural dimension theory explains the cultural differences between different countries. Western culture generally attaches importance to individualism and emphasizes individual freedom and independence. This value originated from the humanistic trend of thought in the Enlightenment, advocating individual rights and self-realization. Eastern culture emphasizes collectivism in Confucianism, focusing on harmony, collective well-being and social responsibility. Collectivism emphasizes the individual's contribution and dependence on the collective in the East, while individualism advocates individual independence and the right of self-selection in the West. These two cultural backgrounds have a profound impact on the understanding of the rebel archetype and its cultural significance. This reflects the fundamental cultural differences between Chinese and Western cultures in dealing with individuals, collectives, freedom and authority.

The background and cultural origins of the image of the rebels also give different historical significance to the rebels. Sun Wukong's reinterpretation of rebellion and domestication shows the important role of individual free will in the value of individual life, and also accuses the institutional order of restraining and stifling individual subject consciousness and individual free will (Li & Wang, 2018); Prometheus symbolizes the human pursuit of progress and wisdom in ancient Greek mythology, representing both a rebellion against oppression and an enlightenment of humanity. He shows the dual role of the rebels in history. Both the rebels against oppression and the enlighteners of human progress; Compare to Sun Wukong, Prometheus' rebellion is a symbol of the individual's confrontation with divine authority, reflecting the Western ethos of challenging established norms in pursuit of progress, even at great personal cost. Satan represents the debate on the degeneration of human nature and free will in Christian culture. The contrasting experiences of Satan and Sun Wukong reflect the cultural and educational differences between the West, which puts emphasis on individual free will, and the East, which prioritizes collective consciousness.

The image of the rebels transcends the specific cultural background and becomes a psychological and behavioral link connecting different cultures. Sun Wukong is not merely a rebel who challenges authority, but also a symbol of justice, bravery and loyalty. The human courage shown in the face of oppression is deeply rooted in the collective unconsciousness and has become a common symbol of the image of rebels in different cultural backgrounds. The performance of the rebel archetype in different cultural backgrounds is not only the individual's challenge and resistance to the outside world, but also a deeper reflection of the continuous exploration of freedom, identity, responsibility and moral choice in the long history of human beings.

4.3 The Collective Unconscious Underlying the Archetype of the Rebel

The rebel archetype reflects the deep psychological needs of human beings in the collective unconscious, while also revealing the individual's strong desire for freedom, independence, and self-realization. This prototype transcends the conflict at the individual level and reflects the broad resonance of the tension between individual desires and norms in human society and

culture. Through the analysis of Sun Wukong's image, the root of the rebel prototype and its universality in human psychology are unveiled. The rebel archetype reflects the deep psychological needs of human beings in the collective unconscious, revealing the individual's strong desire for freedom, independence, and self-realization.

Freud's psychoanalysis theory provides an important framework for understanding the prototype of the rebels. According to Freud's point of view, the "triple structure" of the individual's heart — "id", "self" and "superego" — is the fundamental source of human spiritual conflict. Among them, "id" represents the individual's original desire and instinct, "superego" is the internalized social norms and moral constraints, and "self" regulates the balance between the two. When the individual's id needs are suppressed by external social norms, rebellious behavior becomes a natural psychological reaction. Sun Wukong's image is a vivid manifestation of this psychological structure: he was born between heaven and earth and has not been subject to any social education and moral constraints. This period can also be regarded as the baby period of human beings, in the original state where "id" dominates. However, in the process of constantly colliding with the outside world, growing up and gradually contacting with the culture, he gradually reflected the challenge and rebellion against the "superego". Sun Wukong, the queen of Huaguo Mountain, found the book of life and death in the local government, and angrily crossed out the names of himself and the monkeys from the book of life and death, in order to resist the fate of the reincarnation of life and death. "Wukong took the register and crossed out all the names of the monkeys, saying, 'Settled! Settled! Now you have no control over me!' With a flourish of his rod, he made his way out of the underworld." (Wu, 2010) This act reveals Sun Wukong's fearless challenge to the order of nature and society, and reflects the deep opposition between "id" and "superego." Similarly, the image of Nezha, who rebels against the fate set by his parents for him and is determined to pursue his own freedom and identity, also shows a strong "id" trait. In Paradise Lost, Satan is expelled from heaven for refusing to submit to God's authority. His resistance challenges God as well as authority and social norms, showcasing the id's fearless struggle against the superego.

While Freud's theory only discussed this conflict from the individual perspective, later

scholars such as Adler and Lacan further extended this theory to the social and cultural level. Adler's "individual psychology" theory emphasizes the importance of social factors in shaping individual behavior and believes that the individual's psychological state is both a reflection of inner instinct and a product deeply connected to the social environment and cultural context. From this perspective, the behavior of the rebels reflects the individual's inner conflict and serves as a resistance to the oppressive civilization within a broader social and cultural framework. At the same time, Freud also discussed the tension between the process of civilization and human instinct in "civilization and its dissatisfaction", pointing out that the development of civilization is achieved through the suppression of individual instincts and impulses. Sun Wukong refused to follow the destiny, challenge the authority of the gods and other rebellious acts, displaying the irreconcilable conflict between culture and individual, which is a profound reflection on the suppression of civilization. This conflict is reflected in Sun Wukong's resistance and in the tension between the individual and culture, as well as between freedom and norms, in the process of civilization development in human society.

The research on rebels goes beyond the stage of challenge, with their growth process also being worth exploring. "It occurs in the process of personality maturation caused by unconscious analysis, which has been named as individualization process by me." (Jung, 2011) The process of individuation is the adjustment process between consciousness and unconsciousness, and a person's understanding of his own essence. Sun Wukong's journey of taking scriptures is the process of "individualization". This process is not only the inhibition of "id", but also his acceptance of social norms and the establishment of personal order, which reflects the path of individual self-realization in internal and external conflicts. This is akin to the process of human development. , that is, the "self" is gradually formed in the constant reconciliation of "id" and "superego". During the journey, Sun Wukong gradually moved from simple rebellion to the recognition of norms and the commitment of responsibilities. He learned how to suppress his own impulses and desires, while maintaining individual independence and freedom consciousness. His early rebellious acts, such as tampering with the book of life and death and making a fuss about the Heavenly Palace, reflected his struggle against external oppression and

injustice. However, with the advancement of the journey, Sun Wukong gradually realized that simple rebellion could not bring real satisfaction. Only by following certain norms and responsibilities could he obtain inner peace and growth. He incorporated his unconscious part - the desire for freedom and the challenge to norms - into consciousness, realized integration, and became a more complete individual. In contrast, Prometheus still sticks to his own views in the face of punishment after stealing fire, showing the complex relationship between responsibility and rebellion; through self-resistance and growth, Nezha finally accepted his own destiny, completed self-redemption, and realized the harmony between his heart and the outside world.

The rebel archetype reflects the common psychological needs of human collective unconsciousness: including the establishment of subjectivity, self-realization, the exploration of identity and the pursuit of independence and freedom. These needs together constitute the complexity and depth of the role of the rebels. Jung's theory of collective unconsciousness points out that these archetypes are universal structures that exist across cultures. Sun Wukong is not just an isolated figure; he shares similarities with the archetype of global rebels, becoming a symbol of human psychology that transcends time, space, and culture. In the meanwhile, the rebel archetype symbolizes the individual's internal need to resist social oppression and restraint, while also revealing the motivation behind how individuals break through the established order to pursue freedom and self-realization in a disciplined society. From the perspective of cultural criticism, the essence of rebellion lies in the profound reflection and resistance to power structure, cultural discipline and economic injustice. The rebel prototype is the dominant symbol between this instinctive demand and social oppression, reflecting the individual's desire to seek breakthroughs and changes in the social environment dominated by power elites.

The history of social development shows that individuals are often bound by the cultural and political framework shaped by the upper class and are in the structure of unequal power. Herbert Marcuse pointed out that modern capitalism regulates individual thinking through ideological means such as education and media, making people tend to be 'single' and 'obedient'. Paulo Freire also claimed that modern society forces individuals to obey and lose their independent thinking ability through the education system. Through the

regulation of thought and behavior, education frames the potential and creativity of individuals and limits them in the social structure. This process led to the intensification of class differentiation. A small number of elites controlled social resources and power, while the bottom individuals were forced to live according to the rules set by the upper class, gradually losing the ability to reflect and resist, and the spirit of rebellion was gradually lost. The lack of rebellious spirit makes people often choose to compromise rather than resist in the face of oppression and injustice. Thus, in this kind of disciplinary system, the significance of the rebel prototype is becoming more and more essential.

Sun Wukong's image is a typical rebel prototype. Through rebellion and self-growth, he challenged the authority of heaven and profoundly resisted the feudal hierarchy and religious constraints. His rebellion is not only a confrontation against external oppression, but also an internal self-liberation. Through constant resistance and awakening, break through self-limitation, to achieve inner freedom and growth.

Nowadays, capitalist media shape public thinking and deepen compliance through advertising, consumer culture and other means, weakening individual critical thinking and independence. The solidification of the social class allows the interests of the upper class to be passed on from generation to generation, which aggravates the phenomenon of "one-dimensional people", and the independence and reflective ability of individuals are suppressed. Nevertheless, the rebel prototype provides the possibility to break through this dilemma. The spirit of rebellion awakens the individual's desire for freedom, independence and self-realization. It reminds us to examine and challenge the discipline and oppression of society and reconstruct the relationship between individual and collective. In an oppressive environment, the rebels challenge the existing order, respond to the needs of freedom and self-realization in the collective unconscious, break the 'one-dimensional' limitations through rebellion, and regain multi-dimensional life experience and spiritual freedom.

5. CONCLUSION

Through the analysis and cross-cultural comparison of Sun Wukong's image and its commonness with Prometheus, Satan and Nezha, this paper discusses how they reflect the rebel archetypes and reveals the social and cultural significance of the collective unconscious behind

these images. The research analyzed that the image of Sun Wukong as a rebel has obvious commonalities with the Western characters such as Prometheus, Satan and Nezha. These images represent the individual's resistance to authority and injustice, while also reflecting humanity's pursuit of freedom, creativity, and self-realization. Through the analysis of the prototype of the rebels, we further realize the important position of the rebel spirit in the development of human culture and psychology. In the cross-cultural comparison, although the images of rebels are different in different cultural backdrops, they all point to the tension between human society's desire for individual freedom and collective consciousness. In particular, the different values of individualism and collectivism in Eastern and Western cultures have led to different interpretations of the meaning of the rebel archetype: Western culture often emphasizes individualism and independence, while Eastern culture emphasizes the harmonious coexistence of individuals and collectives. The rebel prototype represents a challenge to society or authority and serves as a profound reflection on the relationship between the individual and the collective, as well as freedom and responsibility.

This study provides a new cultural perspective for us to understand the image of Sun Wukong and other rebels, and also provides enlightenment on how to balance individual freedom and collectivism. While revealing social problems, it also shows the possibility that collective and individual, freedom and responsibility can go hand in hand and complement each other.

Although this study has explored cross-cultural comparisons, it remains lacking in the analysis of specific cultural contexts, particularly in the examination of rebel archetypes within non-Western cultures. Hence, future research could focus more on the image of rebels across different cultures and explore how it continues to evolve and be passed down in contemporary society. In addition, the dialectical relationship between individualism and collectivism is still an important direction for future research. How to find a harmonious way of coexistence in the context of deepening globalization is worthy of our further thinking and exploration.

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