

The Structural Patterns and Deepening Themes of Filial Piety Tale Among Various Ethnic Groups in Xinjiang

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the structural patterns and deepening themes of filial piety tale among various ethnic groups in Xinjiang, in which structural pattern are mainly of three kinds: contrastive, overlapping and progressive. Through the contrastive structure mode, compare the behavior of filial son and unfilial son and the consequences behind the beauty and ugliness, showing the perception of the public that "filial son get good reward, unfilial son will be punished". In the overlapping structural pattern, the narrative of the several trials and tribulations encountered by the filial son and his eventual victory expresses the idea that "the filial son will one day overcomes difficulties and achieves his goal". In the progressive structural pattern, narrate tortuous experience of the filial son expresses the concept of "the filial son will be rewarded in the end". By analyzing the structural pattern of filial piety tale in Xinjiang, people can see the cognition of filial piety among various ethnic groups in Xinjiang, and also the common characteristics of the filial piety culture of the Chinese people.

Keywords: *Filial piety tale among ethnic groups in Xinjiang, Contrastive structural pattern, Overlapping structural pattern, Progressive structural pattern.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The structural pattern of folktale refers to the overall morphological pattern of the relationship between the components of it. Folktale usually have fixed programs and set phrases, and have their own structural pattern, which is an important feature of folktale in narrative structure, although some structural pattern may also appear in myth and folk legend, but in general the fixed structural pattern is an obvious feature of folktale in narrative structure. [1] Structural pattern on the surface, although it is not very relevant to the connotation of filial piety culture, but in fact the structural pattern of a folktale affects the dissemination and inheritance of this story. Discussing and analyzing the structural pattern of folk tale of filial piety among various ethnic groups in Xinjiang is great significant for a more in-depth study of how folktale transmits the concept of filial piety culture from one generation to the next.

Each structural pattern is often associated with the content of a certain type or several types of

folktale, and the structural pattern of these tales are also closely related to the content of the stories. Some specific plots can be better expressed through some specific structural pattern. For example, if the content is to emphasize the conflict between a filial son and a not filial son, then it is inevitable that a contrastive structure would be more appropriate. From this point of view, the systematic study of the structure mode of filial piety stories of ethnic groups in Xinjiang is an important task and one of the innovative points of this paper.

The structural patterns of folk filial piety stories of Xinjiang ethnic groups is gradually formed in the process of long-term inheritance from generation to generation, with great stability, which provides norms for the circulation of folk filial piety stories. The author categorizes the filial piety story structure of ethnic groups in Xinjiang into three types: contrastive, overlapping and progressive. Contrastive structural pattern shows the virtues of the protagonist through the principle of binary opposition, which is common in folktales. In folktales, it is often the case that similar episodes

appear three times, by means of which the plot is promoted, this structural pattern is the overlapping structural pattern. The progressive structural pattern is centered around the main storyline, gradually deepening the contradictions and conflicts of the story, and finally forming a climax through the layers of the storyline. It can be said that each mode has its own inherent characteristics and laws, and dividing the structure of filial piety stories of the ethnic groups in Xinjiang into these three modes can make the structure of filial piety stories show more clearly, which is more conducive to the study of filial piety stories of the ethnic groups in Xinjiang. By analyzing and studying the structural patterns, the embodiment of the theme of filial piety in the folktales will be deepened, so the study of the structural patterns is very necessary.

2. CONTRASTIVE STRUCTURAL PATTERNS

Contrastive structural pattern can also be referred to as the principle of binary opposition in folktales, in which there is usually a binary opposition between two images and behaviors, such as good and evil, beauty and ugliness, with good being extremely good and evil being extremely evil.[2] Story structures in the xibe folktale "The Living Buddha", the Uzbek folktale "You reap what you sow", the Kirgiz folktale "Stepmother", and the Uyghur folktale "Two Boxes" all belong to the contrastive structural pattern. The binary opposition may appear in one character or in two characters.

2.1 *The Binary Opposition Appears in One Character*

Xibe folktale "The Living Buddha"[3], the protagonist abandons his aged and weak mother and goes out to visit a living Buddha to learn the Buddhism. When he returns home after hearing the monk's words, he realizes that the living Buddha he has been searching for so long is his mother. Since then, the main character is transformed from a not filial son into a filial one. In the Uzbek folktale "You reap what you sow"[4], the young man does not honor his father, and when he hears that his son is going to treat him the same way when he grows up, he finally comes to his senses and begins to honor his parents. The binary opposition in these two stories is presented in the same person, e.g., from being ungrateful to being filial. In addition to this, the binary opposition of changing from laziness to diligence also occurs in the folk tales of

filial piety of various ethnic groups in Xinjiang, forming a before-and-after contrast of the same person, for example, "Two Lazy Men".

2.2 *The Binary Opposition Appears in Two Characters*

The folk piety stories of various ethnic groups in Xinjiang usually contrast the two characters of good and evil, i.e., the good man is good and beautiful from the inside to out, while the bad man is ugly and evil from the inside to out. For example, the Uyghur folktale "Two Boxes" [5] consists of the following episodes:

- 1) Zumrat, the stepdaughter, is a beautiful, intelligent and polite girl, while Kemmet is ugly, stupid, lazy and petulant;
- 2) After Zumrat came to the house of the granny, she took good care of her, and the granny gave her a red chest full of treasures. Whereas kemmet did nothing at the granny's house and the granny gave her a white chest full of poisonous snakes.

In this story, by comparing the appearance, character, behavior and consequences of Zumrat and Kemmet, two characters, one beautiful and one ugly, are shown, and in the end, the good people get happiness and the bad people are punished. Therefore, the structure of this story belongs to the contrasting structural pattern. The two sisters in the tale form a clear contrast to express people's love and hate, and this Contrasting structural pattern is heard time and again in folktales. For example, the structure of the "Cinderella-type" story, which is the most popular worldwide, belongs to the contrasting structural pattern. Contrastive structure is a cognitive mode, which is a concentrated manifestation of people's thinking. In the filial piety stories of various ethnic groups in Xinjiang, the contrasting structural pattern further compare the behavior of filial son and not filial son, and the consequences behind their beautiful and ugly, good and bad behaviors, and expresses the people's concept of "filial son get good reward, not filial son get bad reward". This contrasting structural pattern can greatly highlight the conflict in the plot, attracting the readers' attention and at the same time highlighting the power and importance of filial piety.

The traditional Chinese ethical culture emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between right from wrong, love and hatred. Most folktales have a contrasting structural pattern of good and evil retribution, which makes the general

Chinese population gain psychological recognition and emotional pleasure when reading and appreciating these works. Therefore, in the process of listening to and reading folk tales of filial piety, the listener or reader not only appreciates a story, but also gets the author's comments and feelings. Therefore, folktales do not focus on portraying complex characters, and the plot conflicts are mostly the positive and negative struggles between good and evil, arranging an ending in which good is rewarded and evil is punished, advocating truth, goodness and beauty.

3. OVERLAPPING STRUCTURAL PATTERNS

Overlapping structural pattern refers to the occurrence or repetition of the same or similar storyline three or more times continuously in a folktale in order to promote the development of the plot, which is also called triple-stacked structural pattern, three-part structural pattern and so on.[6] This structural pattern is constituted by several parallel repetitions of the same plot, such as the three brothers going to distant places one after another to search for treasures, the hero protagonist going through three trials and tribulations, and the good people fighting with the bad people for three times, and so on.[7] There are two forms of overlapping structural patterns, one is that one main character does three identical or similar things in succession, and the other is that three characters accomplish three identical or similar things successively.[8] The structure of the Uzbek folktales "The Girl Who Restored Her Blind Father's Sight" and "The Banshee" belongs to the overlapping structural pattern, in which a main character does three identical or similar things in succession. Uzbek folktale "The Girl Who Restored Her Blind Father's Sight"[9] consists of the following episodes:

- 1) The five sons of the old man go in search of medicine in the treasure-house of King Lumu in order to restore their blind father's sight, but they return home empty-handed without any luck;
- 2) The old man's daughter bids farewell to her father and sets out in search of the medicine, but is stopped on the way by a giant dragon. The dragon was deeply moved by the story of her filial piety and therefore wanted to help her;

- 3) King Lumu made a condition: "If you can deliver the princess of King Darhan Khan, you will be given the medicine";
- 4) The dragon and the girl came to King Darhan Khan, who also made a condition: "If you can bring King Haila Khan's black divine horse, you will be given the princess.";
- 5) King Haila Khan gives the black divine horse to the old man's daughter, who leads the black horse to King Darhan Khan, who gives her the princess. The girl offered the princess to King Lumu, who gave the medicine to the old man's daughter;
- 6) Eventually, her father's eyesight was restored.

The main character in this story, i.e. the old man's daughter, undergoes many trials and tribulations and finally wins to achieve her goal, so the structure of this story belongs to the overlapping structural pattern.

Folktale "The Banshee"[10] consists of the following episodes:

- 1) The young man visits his family in the countryside according to his mother's wish and encounters a monster, which pursues him in order to eat the young man;
- 2) The young man takes out a magic stone and throws it behind him as he runs, and the stone turns into a tall mountain that separates the female demon from the young man. The monster crosses the mountain and is about to catch up with the young man;
- 3) The young man took out magic a mirror from his pocket and threw it at the banshee's feet. The mirror turns into a big river, blocking the banshee's way. The banshee swims across the river and is about to catch up with the lad;
- 4) The lad throws the comb, and as soon as it hits the ground, it immediately turns into a big forest. The banshee used her teeth as a saw and started biting up the trees;
- 5) The lad arrives at his house when the banshee is about to catch up with him, and eventually, the lad's dog defeats the banshee.

In the story "The Banshee", the similar plot of "the banshee chases the lad - the lad is saved from danger" is repeated three times. Therefore, the structure of this story belongs to the overlapping structural pattern. In the overlapping structural

pattern, the narrative of the several trials and tribulations encountered by the filial son and his eventual triumph shows the idea that “the filial son will one day overcome difficulties and achieves his goal”, which guides readers to be virtuous, and to fulfill their filial duties. This overlapping structure can maximize the hardship experienced by the protagonist in order to achieve the goal, so as to highlight the happy ending.

In the overlapping structural pattern, similar plots are combined and linked, and multiple conflicts appear in sequence to push the storyline forward and ultimately bring it to a climax. This makes this kind of story structure itself has a kind of rhythmic beauty and order, and contains the meaning of the story character who suffers a lot but does not die, and indomitable victory over the opponent. It maximizes aesthetic attention, and the setting of multiple conflicts keeps the listener in the tension of the storyline. With the continuous emergence and resolution of conflicts, the receiver feels the tension and relief of the storyline, feels the sense of joy, anger, sadness and happiness of the characters in the story, and pays attention to the fate of the characters. At the same time, this structural pattern is conducive to the memorization and dissemination of folktales, and the constant repetition of the story makes the listener's emotions acquire a pattern. Through repetition, the character's mind can be better molded and sound new sensibility. The overlapping structure is rich in content, reflecting the aesthetic form of diversity and unity, which neither gives people a sense of clutter nor monotony, which is the characteristic of the overlapping structure mode.

4. PROGRESSIVE STRUCTURAL PATTERN

Progressive structural pattern refers to the structural mode that centers around the main storyline, gradually deepens the contradictions and conflicts of the story, and finally forms the climax through the layers of the storyline.[11] The progressive structural pattern increases the interest of folktales through the ups and downs of the plot. The structure of folktales such as “The City of Naf Treasure and virtue”, “The Horse-Master” and “The Magic Garden” belongs to the progressive structural pattern. The Tajik folktale “The City of Naf Treasure and virtue”[12] consists of the following episodes:

- 1) A gardener, in front of the many people, leaves a will for his son, Kadam: “As far as

I can remember, I have borrowed nothing from anyone. But if anyone comes to you to collect a debt, do not say that you will not pay it.” After the old man's death, the number of people who came to collect the debt increased;

- 2) Kadam had to sell his entire orchard and house to cover the debt; Kadam led his wife and children away from hometown to the great coast;
- 3) Seeing a very large ferry boat on the shore, the owner of the boat agreed to Kadam's request to allow his family to cross the sea. Suddenly, a tsunami struck and most of the people on the board perished and died, with only a few survivors desperately clinging to the broken planks to save themselves;
- 4) Kadam is washed up on an island and has a magical dream in which an old man informs him of the location of a treasure. Kadam then finds the treasure and uses the gemstones to turn the deserted island into a town named The City of Naf Treasure and virtue;
- 5) Kadam kind and friendly, to the poor people who came here very sympathetic and eager to help. The people of the town consulted and unanimously elected Kadam as the master of the castle;
- 6) During the night, the two guards began to tell their experiences, to realize that the two of them were brothers, Kadam's son, washed up at sea. The sister of the merchant in the house also realizes that the two of them are her sons after she hears about the guards' experiences;
- 7) Eventually, Kadam's family is reunited.

This story is based on the character of Kadam's filial piety, and because of this character quality, Kadam sells his family's property in order to repay his father's will and goes out of his hometown, and this is the main line of the plot of Kadam's family's separation to reunion, which is gradually deepening the contradiction and reaching the climax. Therefore, the structure of this story belongs to the progressive structure mode.

Kazakh folktale “The Horse-Master”[13] consists of the following episodes:

- 1) Tolebay taught his son the skill of identifying a thousand-mile horse. Once, the son was herding horses and encountered a group of enemies who not only snatched the horses, but at the same

time plundered the lads as well to go and herd horses for them;

- 2) These thieves sent the boy to the Khan, who kept the young man with him in order to identify the thousand-mile horses;
- 3) According to the young man's judgment, Khan bought a chestnut-colored thin horse. Under the young man's careful feeding, the thin horse recovered and showed the state of a thousand-mile horse;
- 4) A large horse race was held. In the race, the chestnut-colored horse ran like a fly, far ahead of the others, and was the first to the finish line. Khan was very pleased with the lad's abilities;
- 5) Some time later, another horse race was held. The young man rode a chestnut-colored horse and took the opportunity to escape from there and eventually returned home to his family.

This story is based on the young man's ability to identify a thousand-mile horse, and centers on the storyline of the young man's herding, horse identification, horse breeding, horse racing, etc. The storyline gradually deepens the conflict, and finally narrate the climaxes in the intense race the conflict of the flight and escape. Therefore, the structure of this story belongs to the progressive structural pattern. In the filial piety stories of various ethnic groups in Xinjiang, the progressive structural pattern is used to narrate the twists and turns of the filial son's experience, thus expressing the concept of "the filial son will be rewarded in the end" in the mind of the people.

The progressive structure can unfold the plot layer by layer, which is fascinating and at the same time makes readers feel the importance of filial piety. In this kind of story, there is usually a general hint of ambush at the beginning, which creates suspense, and in the process of storytelling, the plot content advances layer by layer, and the conflicts are spread out in turn. In this structural model of the story, the conflict is often not a single, usually more than two. Multiple conflicts appear progressively, advancing the storyline layer by layer and bringing it to a climax. Stories with progressive structural patterns tend to have the same complex plot twists and turns as those with overlapping structural patterns, and the stories are usually longer in length. Progressive structure mode, because of the use of suspense, the storyline echoes back and forth, first set up a doubt and then explain, so that people in the acceptance of the psychological tight and then

loose, in the story after all the conflicts are resolved to give people a unique aesthetic feeling.

5. CONCLUSION

Through the exploration and analysis of the structural pattern and deepening of the themes of filial piety stories among various ethnic groups of Xinjiang in this paper, it can be found that the structure mode of filial piety stories of Xinjiang ethnic groups mainly has three kinds of structure modes such as contrastive, overlapping and progressive. In the contrasting structural pattern of filial piety stories highlights the beauty and ugliness, good and evil through comparison, and extols the virtues of filial piety, kindness and diligence of the positive characters and expresses the people's concept of "filial sons get good rewards, not filial son get bad reward"; In the overlapping structure mode, through the narrative of the several trials and tribulations encountered by the filial son and his eventual victory, the concept of "the filial son always overcomes difficulties and achieves his goal" is expressed, which guides the readers to be kind and virtuous, and to fulfill their filial duties; Through the progressive structural pattern of the narrative of the twists and turns of the filial son's experience, thus showing the concept of "the filial son will be rewarded in the end" in the mind of the people.

Analyzing the structural pattern of folk tales of filial piety in Xinjiang is of great significance for further research on folk tales of filial piety and other themes folk tales in Xinjiang, for understanding and feeling the meaning of folk tales of filial piety in Xinjiang, for exploring and researching all kinds of issues related to folk tales of filial piety in Xinjiang, and for recognizing the laws of literary thinking. At the same time, the study of the structural pattern of filial piety tales of Xinjiang ethnic groups is of great significance for the dissemination and inheritance of filial piety stories and filial piety culture. Through the study of the structure of filial piety stories among the ethnic groups in Xinjiang, we can also realize the value of traditional Chinese filial piety culture, understand the cognition of filial piety among the ethnic groups in Xinjiang, and know the common characteristics of the filial piety culture of the Chinese ethnic groups.

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