

# **The Research on Narrative Structure and Film Language in Chen Kaige's Films**

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## **Abstract**

The objectives of this research were: 1) To study the narrative structure in the films directed by Chen Kaige, and 2) To examine the film language used by Chen Kaige. The sample consisted of three films: "My People, My Country," "The Battle at Lake Changjin," and "The Battle at Lake Changjin II." They were selected based on their thematic and stylistic diversity, representing significant stages in Chen Kaige's directing career. The research instruments for data collection included detailed filmographic analysis, thematic analysis, and theoretical frameworks from film studies. The textual analysis incorporated qualitative methods, including film language and narrative analysis.

The research results were found as follows: 1) Chen Kaige utilizes complex narrative techniques such as nonlinear and multi-threaded narratives to enhance the artistic depth of his films, and 2) His film language is rich and unique, using meticulous color schemes, lighting, camera movements, and sound effects to enhance visual impact and convey deep cultural and emotional themes. Suggestions for further research include exploring the cross-cultural elements in Chen Kaige's films and examining the impact of technological innovations on his narrative structures and visual language.

**Keywords:** Chen Kaige; Film Narrative Structure; Film Language

## **Introduction**

Chen Kaige, born in August 1952 and originally named Chen Aige, comes from Changle, Fujian, and was born in Beijing. He is a renowned Chinese film director who grew up in an artistic family, with his father, Chen Huaikai, being a well-known director in the film industry. Chen Kaige is a leading figure among the fifth generation of Chinese directors. His films are imbued with humanistic care and philosophical reflection, mirroring the historical and cultural changes in Chinese society. Starting with "Yellow Earth" in 1984, his works broke away from traditional narrative norms and created a unique visual style and poetic film language. Chen Kaige's films are both a personal artistic exploration and a microcosm of the development of Chinese cinema. In his works, the relationship between the individual and history, profound reflections on social transformations, and his distinctive visual and narrative style make his films an ideal subject for study. Chen Kaige uses nonlinear narrative and complex visual symbols in his films, offering new ways to understand and interpret Chinese culture and history. For example, "Farewell My Concubine," which is widely acclaimed internationally, showcases the power of cinema as an art form through its profound historical philosophy and complex character relationships (Yang, 2016).

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\* Received: June 22 2024; Revised: July 4 2024; Accepted: July 6 2024

Chen Kaige's films are not only known for their impressive visual effects but also for capturing and reflecting the dual thinking and emotions of cultural history. Dubbed a "scholarly director," Chen draws deeply from his rich traditional cultural base, infusing his works with profound cultural symbols and meanings. Some of his works vividly display the bravery and sacrifice that shape Chinese national identity through the exploration of key historical events (Yu, 2015). These films are famous for their detailed narratives and striking visual effects, covering a wide range of themes from ancient philosophy to contemporary social changes. Through these works, Chen not only captivates visually but also profoundly reflects cultural memories and emotions, effectively capturing significant aspects of Chinese history, culture, and emotion, thus making them significant both as entertainment and cultural works, and technically advancing Chinese cinema while deeply exploring complex layers of humanity and society.

Chen Kaige's films have received widespread international recognition, yet academic research on how he shapes narrative through film language remains scarce. This gap is particularly evident in understanding the powerful impact of these elements. Studying this gap allows appreciation of the filmmaking techniques and grasp the cultural, political, and social ideas presented in these films. This research will explore the narrative techniques and themes in these films and examine how the visual style enhances these stories. Emphasizing the importance of cultural background in film analysis, as highlighted by scholars, this study will explore the cultural and historical backgrounds presented in these films and their visual style. In today's global cinematic environment, understanding different cultural perspectives is particularly important.

This research seeks to bridge the academic gap in the study of Chen Kaige's cinematic contributions by analyzing the interplay between narrative structures and visual aesthetics that characterize his films. Despite the global acclaim Chen's films have received, there remains a limited scholarly focus on the intricate ways in which his film language and narrative styles engage with and influence the portrayal of Chinese cultural identity and historical consciousness. This study will scrutinize the subtle nuances of Chen's storytelling and visual symbolism, highlighting how these elements resonate with both domestic and international audiences. By exploring the depth of Chen's artistic endeavors and their impact on the evolution of narrative cinema in China, this research aims to contribute significantly to the understanding of film as a medium of cultural expression and historical reflection. Through a comprehensive analysis of selected films, this research will enhance the academic discourse surrounding Chinese cinema, offering insights into its unique narrative techniques and thematic richness. By doing so, the study will not only celebrate Chen Kaige's artistic achievements but also illuminate the broader socio-cultural narratives that his films navigate, reflecting the dynamic interplay between cinema, culture, and history in contemporary China.

By providing detailed analysis, this research aims to explore how the narrative structure and visual aesthetics in Chen Kaige's specific films blend to create powerful cinema. The ultimate goal is to provide a more detailed understanding of his work and its place in the global cinematic landscape, enriching the discussion of Chinese cinema and its cross-cultural interpretation. This study seeks to explore how these films express and embody the collective memory and emotions of Chinese society by deeply investigating the cultural and historical backgrounds depicted in Chen Kaige's films.

## Research Objectives

1. To study the narrative structure in the films directed by Chen Kaige.
2. To examine the film language used by Chen Kaige.

## Literature Review

Ren Pingfan (2020) in "An Analysis of the Aesthetic Characteristics of Chen Kaige's Films" mentions that Chen Kaige promotes his own cultural stance through his films. He conveys the concept of humanistic care to the audience through his movies. He deeply analyzes the grand themes of tradition versus modernity, material versus civilization, and spirit versus ideals, skillfully blending the elegant with the vulgar and using his unique aesthetic standpoint and perspective to conduct a deeper study and exploration of the entire Chinese nation. The strong use of dynamic and colorful images resonates with most audiences. Chen Kaige's film scenes are mostly presented to the audience in static shots, particularly prominent in "Yellow Earth." During the filming of "Yellow Earth," the camera is mostly stationary. The wedding scenes in the film use four sets of static scenes from distant to close. Under the static shots, the loess land appears more profound and oppressive. The surface of the Yellow River is calm and gentle, but internally turbulent, just like the plot expressed by the entire film. There are no tense scenes that grab people's hearts; instead, the themes are expressed in a slow and extended tone, presenting the film's themes to the audience with restrained emotion. Chen Kaige uses static shots to showcase the vast expanses of loess land, and he also uses static shots to display the backwardness of Chinese feudal culture. In the film, apart from the clips related to farmers playing waist drums and running, there are hardly any dynamic images. The director's unusual way of showing the loess land also has symbolic significance. The slow narrative tone also creates a heavy and vague space for the slow development of the entire nation.

Wu Shan & Sun Shaojun (2008) in "Appreciating the artistic style of China's Fifth Generation directors: Inheritance and evolution" mention that observing the creative process of Chen Kaige's films, it is not difficult to find a clear dividing point in his creative process. The early creative films are termed early film creation, representing cultural exploration and pure film and television creation, while the later creative works are termed late film works, representing a combination of humanistic content and commercial motives. Firstly, the exploration stage primarily involves Chen Kaige's early works. The innovation in artistic form and reflection and critique of traditional culture are the main characteristics of these works. Secondly, in the innovation stage, Chen Kaige gains a new understanding of humanistic content and integrates it into the film creation process. In this period, he attempts to explore and innovate the humanistic content of films and conduct deep cultural reflections, endowing the films with a humanistic mission and philosophical content. In the transformation stage, Chen Kaige's films are influenced by commercial culture, and their humanistic content is somewhat affected and disturbed, shifting towards a path that both ensures humanistic content and caters to market and audience demands. Finally, in the formation stage, the humanistic content and characteristic expression in Chen Kaige's films become essentially mature, forming a distinctive style, and align with mainstream film aesthetics in terms of film humanistic content style, achieving certain success in the artistic quality and appreciation of films.

Research Methodology

This study focuses on examining the narrative structures and visual aesthetics in Chen Kaige's films. A qualitative research methodology is employed to deeply explore the unique narrative techniques and artistic expressions that define his films. This is aimed at comprehensively understanding how Chen Kaige constructs his narratives and visual styles within his works.

1. Research methods

The focus is on selecting a group of Chen Kaige's films due to their importance in representing the evolution of his narrative and visual aesthetics. These films, including "My People, My Country," "The Battle At Lake Changjin," and "The Battle At Lake Changjin II," provide a diverse and cohesive sample for analysis (Table 1). This selection ensures a comprehensive understanding of Chen Kaige's film structure and language. The reason for choosing these specific films lies in their thematic and stylistic diversity, which collectively offers rich material for exploring Chen's impact on the cinematic landscape. This representative sample is considered sufficient for in-depth analysis to meet the research objectives.

Table 1 Select three films by Chen Kaige

Release Year	2019	2021	2022
Film Name	My People, My Country	The Battle At Lake Changjin	The Battle At Lake Changjin II
Film Poster			

2. Research Tools

The primary research tools include detailed filmographic analysis and theoretical frameworks related to film studies. This involves a careful examination of the narrative structures and visual aesthetics in Chen Kaige's selected films. The analysis will be based on established theories in film studies, particularly those related to narrative construction and visual representation. Additionally, thematic analysis will be used to explore recurring themes and symbols in the films. These tools are chosen to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of Chen Kaige's filmmaking style and his contributions to the art of cinema.

### 3. Data Collection

The data collection process is carefully designed to analyze the narrative and visual elements in Chen Kaige's films. Films are selected based on their relevance to the research questions, covering various stages of Chen Kaige's directing career. Each film will be viewed multiple times to capture the complex details in narrative and cinematography. To complement this primary analysis, secondary sources such as scholarly articles, film reviews, and existing critiques of Chen Kaige's works are also consulted. These sources provide background depth, aiding in understanding the cultural and artistic context during the creation of these films. This comprehensive approach ensures a solid dataset, crucial for deriving meaningful insights into Chen Kaige's film techniques and stylistic evolution.

### 4. Data Analysis

In data analysis, multiple qualitative methods are used to interpret the collected data. This includes using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and symbols in Chen Kaige's films. Narrative analysis is utilized to understand story structures, character development, and plot progression. Film language analysis focuses on cinematography, color schemes, and composition to understand aesthetic choices. This multifaceted approach enables a comprehensive understanding of Chen Kaige's filmmaking style, linking narrative and visual elements with a broader cultural and historical context. These findings are then synthesized to draw conclusions about Chen Kaige's impact and significance in the film industry.

### 5. Conceptual framework

As Table 2.

**Table 2** Summary table of key aspects of Chen Kaige's film style and influences

Category	Details
Personal Philosophy	Merging form and spirit, exploration of human themes
Narrative Techniques	Complex narratives enhancing depth and complexity
film language	Meticulous planning, symbolic elements
Cultural and Historical Impact	Influence on Chinese cinema, global recognition
Key Contributions	Cultural depth, artistic exploration

## Research Results

### 1. Narrative Structure in Chen Kaige's Films

#### 1.1 Characters

A common theme in these three films directed by Chen Kaige is patriotism. In "My People, My Country," the director does not intend to establish a realistic narrative connection between two teenagers and a reentry capsule, but instead delves into finding an awakening experience between humble, poor, and morally lost souls and transcendent mythological circumstances. As Uncle Li leads the two teenagers on horseback across the Gobi Desert, their emotions shift from excitement to curiosity and then to sudden exhilaration. In a series of scenes where the reentry capsule passes through space, enters the atmosphere, and opens its parachutes, everyone momentarily forgets the rights and wrongs, resentments, desires, malice, and even despair of their mundane past lives, immersing themselves in an uncontrollable torrent. This fluctuation of emotions and intoxication of the blood even urges people to sacrifice

themselves without hesitation. However, when a "meteor" slides from the vast universe toward the desert, the tiny lives on the ground are inspired by a powerful spiritual force, starting to look up at the stars, going beyond the scope of human-inherited textual thoughts.

"The Battle At Lake Changjin II" vividly depicts the soldiers of the Seventh Steel Company walking through the ice and snow. Together, they cooperate to blow up the Shuimen Bridge and directly attack the American headquarters. The film has many tear-jerking moments. Compared to previous works, it is more heroic and pessimistic. The hymns echoing in the air belong to those martyrs who shed their blood. It is extremely desolate. The film is entirely about human performance from beginning to end.

### 1.2 Conflict

Conflict is a vital element of the films. Chen Kaige's films have always revolved around the conflict between the personal growth of the underdog and the nation, and the growth of these small figures alongside the development of the entire country. For example, the three films currently under study typically exemplify the survival conflict between the individual and the nation, ultimately sacrificing the small family unit for the greater good (Wan, 2023).

In "My People, My Country," the two brothers were initially not doing their jobs well but eventually undergo a baptism of the motherland and become individuals who contribute to society. Meanwhile, they are also influenced by everyone's love. In both parts of "The Battle At Lake Changjin," it's entirely about the growth story of two brothers as underdogs and those around them. Faced with the decline of the country, they had to make choices in the conflict between the individual and the nation. The volunteer soldiers advance through heavy snow. In the film, a dozen American planes encounter the Seventh Company, but they just symbolically strafe with machine guns before leaving, as their target was the volunteer artillery camp. If the Chinese army's artillery could not keep up, the massive casualties of the First Marine Division could have been avoided. Reading the history of the Korean War, one is always moved by the bravery and fearlessness of the people's soldiers. If the combatants had equivalent equipment strength, why was the war so brutal? "The Battle At Lake Changjin" resulted in heavy casualties. Under such harsh conditions, what supports the people's soldiers in battle? It is willpower, and this willpower comes from the love for the nation and people.

### 1.3 Theme

"My People, My Country" showcases the central ideas of patriotism, people-centric values, and patriotism. The film is based on the stories of ordinary people and the republic since the establishment of new China 70 years ago. Through different historical periods, characters, and events, it shows the deep affection and patriotic spirit of the Chinese people towards their homeland (Yang, 2019). This patriotic spirit runs through the entire film and is its soul and core. Simultaneously, the film emphasizes the "people-centric" creative philosophy, focusing on and expressing the creators, witnesses, and "actors" of history—the people.

"The Battle At Lake Changjin" is a great victory of the Chinese People's Volunteers in the Korean War and a miracle in the history of world warfare. The battle witnessed the bravery and determination of the Chinese army and also showcased the national spirit and patriotic sentiments of the Chinese people. We must remember history, commemorate the martyrs, cherish peace, and strive for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation's dream. This could not be achieved without the brave struggle of the numerous volunteer soldiers and the support of the entire nation. In battle, the volunteer soldiers built a steel wall with their flesh and blood, defending the territorial integrity and national dignity of the homeland. At the same

time, the whole nation actively participated in supporting the front lines, providing strong support for the victory of the war.

#### 1.4 Setting

All three films form complete stories. Among them, "The Battle At Lake Changjin II" is very specific, focusing on the battle between the Chinese Volunteers and the American forces at Shuimen Bridge. "The Battle At Lake Changjin II" uses many thrilling visuals and music to underscore the cruelty and tragedy of war. However, the director uses such imagery to display the nobility and greatness of the Chinese Volunteers (Zhu, 2023).

Although they tragically perished in battle, their spirit endures. Meanwhile, the soldiers of the Chinese Volunteers in the film, while not afraid to sacrifice, do not disregard life. On the contrary, they have an infinite attachment to the beautiful rivers and mountains of their homeland and their family back home. The film's story starts from the perspective of the Volunteers' fearless sacrifice and attachment to life, showing the perseverance and heroic spirit of the Chinese military and civilians in defending the nation.

### 2. Film Language in Chen Kaige's Films

#### 2.1 Cinematography

In "My People, My Country," the metaphor of the "meteor" not only refers to the Shenzhou spacecraft but also embodies deeper patriotic emotions. It praises the advancements of the motherland in technology and poverty alleviation and reflects on the social thoughts of intellectuals, all while infused with romanticism, reality, and bravery, resonating deeply from within. Whether you understand the policies of targeted poverty alleviation or the stories of space heroes, as long as you have once dreamed of daytime meteors in your mind and chased dreams in your youth, you should truly experience the powerful impact of the most magnificent dreams combined with the most real situations in the cinema (Chen, 2020).

"The Battle At Lake Changjin" and "The Battle at Lake Changjin II" use a linear narrative to clearly present development and character evolution. They tell the lives and sacrifices of each soldier, utilizing contrasting techniques between the American and Chinese forces. "The Battle At Lake Changjin" is based on a real historical battle, vividly, visually, and concretely presenting characters and stories from the war, combined with modern technology and cinematic techniques, stimulating patriotic feelings in various ways, allowing everyone to emotionally identify with and take pride in their nation.

"The Battle At Lake Changjin" also intricately portrays the family plots of soldiers. Through the joys and sorrows of individuals and families, it shows people's helplessness toward war and their feelings for the country under the historical context of the time. The film also starts with soldiers returning home from the civil war, showcasing the beautiful scenery of the Jiangnan water towns and the harmonious happiness of families. This represents the most genuine wishes of ordinary people and their aspirations for a better future life, which also serves as foreshadowing throughout the film. Ultimately, the call to war disrupts all beauty, and the soldiers must leave their homes for the battlefield. This central theme of the film expresses people's longing for peace.

In the film, three brothers from one family join the revolutionary battlefield in succession, but their parents never think to stop them; instead, they keep their reluctance in their hearts. This implicit and enduring Chinese emotional expression is vividly conveyed in the film, a unique quality of the Chinese people. In fact, behind the combat heroes in the film, there are thousands of revolutionary heroes like them who left their parents, wives, and children, left their homes, and went to the Korean battlefield, sacrificing their youthful lives

for their nation and ethnicity. "The Battle At Lake Changjin" closely links the fate of the nation with individuals, meticulously capturing the emotional transitions of individuals.

### 2.2 Color

In "My People, My Country," Chen Kaige's segment uses rich warm tones to bring us closer to the story's protagonists. The warm atmosphere of the countryside, surrounded by warm tones like orange and golden yellow, conveys positive emotions and gives a sense of hope and dreams. Later, when the audience sees the Shenzhou spacecraft landing, the use of warm and cool color contrasts also symbolizes the protagonist's transition from a confused youth to finding direction.

"The Battle At Lake Changjin" and "The Battle at Lake Changjin II," films about the Battle of Chosin Reservoir during the Korean War, use color not only to enhance visual impact but also to deeply express emotions and themes. The films make extensive use of warm and cool colors to convey the tense atmosphere that the soldiers face in harsh wartime conditions and cold climates, yet they persist. For warm tones, characters are filmed in warm colors, and explosions are used to highlight intense battles and showcase indomitable spirit.

### 2.3 Lighting

In "My People, My Country," director Chen Kaige uses more natural light and warm light sources, creating many warm scenes through skillful lighting design, allowing us to follow the protagonist's story. In the film, the Shenzhou spacecraft lands in beautiful natural scenery, highlighting our story's theme. Faced with the beautiful landscapes of the motherland, our poverty alleviation journey is ongoing, exemplifying the contrast between natural light and artificial light. In artificial light settings, warm-toned lighting is used more frequently to create an atmosphere. In the warm and safe atmosphere of rural interiors, we can feel the warmth of people and the simple emotions of the countryside.

"The Battle At Lake Changjin" and "The Battle at Lake Changjin II" consider lighting an essential part of the film. Lighting evolves with time to push the narrative forward. The lighting design emphasizes the brutality brought by war, while under the management of lighting atmosphere, the audience feels the sadness brought by emotions and sacrifices along with the protagonist. In "The Battle At Lake Changjin," the film uses natural light for filming more frequently. The creation through natural light allows the audience to feel the harsh environment and also reflects the living conditions of the soldiers. At night, artificial light creates tension through the light of war fires, explosions, and flashlights. In "The Battle at Lake Changjin II," most of the daytime battles take place in snowy conditions, therefore utilizing natural light combined with the glare from the snow, while night battles rely on moonlight and firelight, bringing the audience into the tense and mysterious environment of war.

### 2.4 Editing Pace

In "My People, My Country," non-linear narrative editing is used to reveal the background and psychology of the characters. The wandering youth turns over a new leaf with the help of the village. This method gives the film more depth and appeal. In terms of time compression and expansion, the film uses this method for rapid alternating edits to increase visual impact, making a strong impression on the audience (Wang, 2020). In terms of editing pace, fast cuts and slow motion are used to increase contrast effects. The film features many close-ups and slow-motion shots to showcase their inner changes. Parallel editing is also used to increase the narrative's compactness and layering. Through meticulous editing, the film fully sets the stage and explodes emotionally at the climax. Before the Shenzhou reentry capsule lands, the film gradually builds up the audience's emotional expectations through a series of

scene transitions and tight editing; when the reentry capsule successfully lands, the combination of slow motion and music pushes the emotion to its peak, enhancing the audience's emotional experience.

Through clever editing, "The Battle At Lake Changjin" and "The Battle at Lake Changjin II" show the audience the brutality of war and the bravery of soldiers. "The Battle At Lake Changjin" uses non-linear narrative, revealing characters and the background of the war through flashbacks. "The Battle at Lake Changjin II" uses linear narrative, enriching the narrative through alternating between memory and reality. At the same time, more flashbacks allow the audience to immerse themselves in their stories and emotions. In "The Battle At Lake Changjin," important battlefield and emotional turning points are highlighted through time compression and expansion. "The Battle at Lake Changjin II" handles time more delicately, and the audience can also feel this urgency and the tension of the soldiers. In terms of editing pace, "The Battle At Lake Changjin" uses a combination of fast and slow editing to create a strong contrast effect for the audience. In these battle scenes, this fast and slow editing allows the audience to feel a strong sense of oppression and the cruelty of war. In "The Battle at Lake Changjin II," this method is also used to create tension and pacing for everyone, and in many slow-motion shots, we see characters' inner and emotional expressions.

#### 2.5 Sound

In "My People, My Country," finely crafted environmental sounds enhance the realism of the scenes. For example, the roaring, wind, and burning sounds during the landing, and the chirping of birds, wind, and people's conversations in the countryside let the audience feel the tranquility and nature of the countryside. In terms of the score, the film uses poetic atmospheres to pave the way for the audience's emotions and the transformation of the wandering youth, and through different melodies, expresses their inner feelings. In the combination of plot and music, the coherence of the story and the resonance of emotions are enhanced.

The war sound effects in "The Battle At Lake Changjin" are very refined, with gunfire and explosions creating a tense combat environment. "The Battle at Lake Changjin II" also performs well in environmental sounds, especially the explosions in the bridge and raid areas, and the detailed sound effects of soldiers' footsteps make the audience feel as if they are there. The use of natural environmental sound effects in "The Battle At Lake Changjin" enhances the contrast effect of the war. The sound of wind in the brief tranquility after intense battles, the feeling of a cold winter with snowflakes, highlights the cruelty of the battlefield and the loneliness of the homeless soldiers.

"The Battle at Lake Changjin II" also uses natural environmental sounds and the contrast of tense war sounds. The sounds of rivers and birds in the war let the audience feel the brief tranquility amidst intense battles and the power of nature. And essential to such a film is the music. In "The Battle at Lake Changjin II," the music lets people feel the determination and spirit of sacrifice of the soldiers. This combination of music and sound effects immerses the audience in the film, and with the characters' emotional performances, it allows a better understanding of the power of the characters in the film. The synchronization of sound and visuals in the film is very refined, with gunfire and soldiers' movements completely synchronized, enhancing the unity of audio-visuals. At the same time, in the shots of soldiers rushing to the battlefield, the use of exciting background music and dynamic visuals enhances the emotional impact on the characters.

## Discussion

The films of Chen Kaige are imbued with a potent sense of elitism and opportunistic philosophy, which pushes his works beyond superficial analysis and critique typical of conventional cinema. He delves deeply into the complexity of human nature, criticizes human weaknesses, and in a calm yet intense manner, touches the sensitive nerves of audiences. His integration of abstract symbolic elements into traditional narrative structures endows specific historical periods and contexts with limitless expansibility and variability, elevating the exploration of the national spirit to a higher intellectual plane. In his quest for merging "form" and "spirit," Chen Kaige has charted a new course for Chinese cinema.

Ma Dongmei (2015) wrote that Chen Kaige has an almost obsessive passion for film aesthetics. From the coordination of costumes, makeup, and props to the harmonization of every camera angle, he has expressed his pursuit of Eastern aesthetics with a persistence characteristic of Chinese literati. It is more apt to describe him as a philosophical poet than a filmmaker. Chen's films maximize the expressive power of cinematic sound and visuals, using different narratives and music to reflect characters' emotions, create atmospheres, and highlight themes. His films are rich in cultural depth and symbolism. They reflect on history and culture from multiple angles and possess a strong sense of crisis. His works show a respect for human life and a humanistic care for the emotional world. They pursue a unique artistic identity in their creative processes and seek to find a balance between artistic exploration and appreciation. Chen has always considered himself a cultural worker, saying, "Rather than calling myself a film director, I see myself as a cultural worker."

In Zhao Lingjun (2023), each of Chen Kaige's works has made pioneering contributions to Chinese film culture. He projects his philosophical thoughts and explorations about film, life, history, and culture onto the screen, creating a unique cinematic cultural style. His relentless pursuit within the film industry reflects a filmmaker's high sense of historical responsibility and cultural conscience. Chen's path in film creation marks the gradual integration of film art with commerce, which broadly mirrors the development of cinema in New China. His films are not only about the creation of visual aesthetics but also include the pursuit of humanistic values, breaking away from external utilitarian perspectives. This aligns with the awakening of human consciousness centered on humanism and art, bringing the development of Chinese cinema closer to the global stage.

## Conclusion

This study has reached the following conclusions:

1. A comprehensive understanding of Chen Kaige's narrative structures in his films has been achieved. Chen often constructs stories using complex narrative techniques such as non-linear and multi-threaded narratives, which not only enhance the artistic depth of his works but also allow audiences to experience the richness and complexity of the stories from multiple perspectives. This study finds that Chen excels in using film narrative to explore and reflect on the intertwining of social transformation and individual fates, effectively enhancing the emotional depth and philosophical reflection of his films.

2. Profound insights have been gained regarding the use of film language in Chen Kaige's movies. His film language is rich and unique, encompassing his meticulous planning and application of colors, lighting, camera movements, and sound effects. His films enhance the visual impact and more profoundly convey the themes and emotions of the films through

these audiovisual languages, enabling audiences to experience intense sensory responses and further understand the cultural and historical contexts depicted in the films.

## Suggestions

### 1. Theoretical Suggestions

**Deepening Theoretical Frameworks in Film and Cultural Studies:** Future research should develop and refine theories on how films communicate and shape cultural identities in a globalized era. This includes exploring how films reflect and shape societal values and cultural identities through narrative and visual language.

**Application of Interdisciplinary Research Methods:** Encourage the use of interdisciplinary research methods, integrating theories from sociology, psychology, art studies, and cultural studies to provide a more comprehensive film analysis. This approach can help to more deeply understand how symbolic elements and narrative structures in films interact with viewers' cultural experiences and psychological states.

**Film Narrative and Social Change:** Develop theoretical models to analyze how film narratives reflect or influence social changes. Research should focus on how films serve as catalysts or reflectors of social transformation, especially in rapidly changing socio-political environments.

### 2. Policy Suggestions

**Promotion of Film Education and Public Engagement:** Enhance public understanding and appreciation of film arts through public education programs and community engagement plans. This should include integrating film production and analysis courses into school curriculums, as well as organizing film screenings and discussions in public libraries and community centers.

**International Cooperation and Cultural Exchange:** Formulate policies to promote collaborative projects in international film production and distribution, particularly those that can enhance cultural diversity and cross-cultural understanding. This can not only expand the international influence of domestic films but also bring a more diverse array of film choices to national audiences.

### 3. Further Research Suggestions

**Cross-Cultural Film Studies:** Future research could explore the cross-cultural elements in Chen Kaige's films, examining how he merges Chinese traditional culture with Western filmmaking techniques and narrative methods, and how this fusion appeals to international audiences. This research can help understand how audiences from different cultural backgrounds perceive and interpret these films.

**Impact of Technological Innovations on Film:** Further research could focus on how new technologies (such as digitalization and virtual reality) are transforming the narrative structures and visual language of films, particularly in the works of directors like Chen Kaige. Exploring how these technologies are used to enhance narrative depth and audience immersion is a valuable topic.

**Film and Social Change:** Delve deeper into how films reflect and impact social change, especially in rapidly changing societies like China. As a cultural product, how films shape public consciousness, reflect social issues, and drive cultural change is an important area of research.

Audience Studies: Conduct more research on how audiences receive and interpret Chen Kaige's films, particularly among different age groups, genders, and cultural backgrounds. Understanding how audiences perceive and respond to cultural expressions and aesthetic styles in films can provide insights for creating more appealing and educational films.

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