



Research On Ocean Imagery and Contemporary Web Celebrity Narrative in *The Great Hao Daxiao*



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Background Of Thesis Research

01. Background Of Thesis Research

The Great Hao Daxiao is a work published in 2020 by Zhou Wanjing (周婉京), a female author born in the 1990s. This novel focuses on contemporary phenomena like "internet celebrities" and MCNs, narrating the life transitions of two female protagonists — the affluent and beautiful Hao Xia and the inconspicuous Yuan Xiaomo — from the age of 19 to 20.



Theoretical background



- ✓ Over the past two decades, we have witnessed an unprecedented transformation in human history: contemporary culture has rapidly entered a "highly symbolized era."
- ✓ To affirm their own existence, humans must seek the meaning of existence; therefore, symbols are an essential condition of human being. — Zhao Yiheng, *Semiotics: Principles and deductions* (赵毅衡, 《符号学：原理与推演》)

01. Background Of Thesis Research



Symbols associated with the ocean

As a symbol, the ocean became the carrier for Zhou Wanjing (周婉京) to ask about the meaning of existence in The Great Hao Daxiao.

Natural things 自然物

Originally, it did not appear for the purpose of "carrying meaning", but "falling" into the consciousness of people, which only carries meaning, such as oceans, beaches and islands.

Artificial objects 人工器物

It was not originally used to carry meaning, but to use things, such as fashion.

Artificial made "pure symbol" 纯人造符号

Things created entirely for meaning, such as the Banshee Island story and the "MOsea" brand.



*Thesis Research
Ideas*

02. *Thesis Research Ideas*



—

Upon repeated readings of the text, I discerned the unique significance of "the ocean" within the novel.



二

Using semiotic theory, categorize the significant "ocean" symbols in the novel.



三

Construct the list into a meaningful symbolic relationship network.



四

Exploring the characteristics and significance of ocean-related symbols in the narrative of contemporary internet celebrity stories within novel texts.



Main Content Of The Paper

03. Main Content Of The Paper

1. "Sea of Nature: An Explanation for the Absent"

自然之海：对不在场的解释

Zhao Yiheng (赵毅衡) believes that natural objects can serve as a form of semiotics. Their initial existence is not intended to "carry meaning," yet they become symbolized by human consciousness and subsequently imbued with significance.

Sanya's sea →

The setting in which Yuan Xiaomo (袁小漠) and Hao Daxiao (郝大小) are alone together evokes childhood memories for Hao Daxiao. It also becomes a significant symbol later on, prompting Yuan Xiaomo to explain and verify Hao Daxiao's presence.

*Southern coast
of Italy* →

The primary backdrop of Hao Daxiao's childhood memories reveals the presence and significance of another individual in her formative years — her grandmother, who is notably absent from the scenes.



03. Main Content Of The Paper

2. Artificial Beach: A Rediscovery of the Soul.

人造沙滩：对灵魂的再发现

Artificial objects, originally intended for use, represent the second type of symbols. In "The Remarkable Miss Hao Daxiao (郝大小)," they are exemplified by man-made beaches and women's fashion.

Web-celebrity
identity →

Artificial
beach →

- Compared to male internet celebrities, female influencers are often regarded as references for "body consumption."
- Fashion, as a utilitarian man-made symbol, has progressively been reinterpreted as a liberated, actualized, and mythologized form of narcissistic reinvestment.
- Author Zhou Wanjing (周婉京) disagrees with the notions of the "mythical body" and "body supplanting the soul."
- Practical items brought joy to the grandmother and rejuvenated her spirits from days gone by.

03. Main Content Of The Paper

3. "MOsea": A Critique of Alienated Symbolic Consumption.

"MOsea": 对异化符号消费的批判

In *The Great Hao Daxiao*, Zhou Wanjing (周婉京) critiques the alienated consumption and the alienation of symbolic consumption by depicting the shifting competitive dynamics between the rising internet celebrity, Yuan Xiaomo (袁小漠), and the established influencer, Wu Huaguo (无花果).

"Old carriage"
motion



Yuan Xiaomo (袁小漠) couldn't relinquish the freedom to choose what's meaningful. Her initial refusal to identify with her internet celebrity status was largely a rejection of the significance represented by internet celebrities like "Wu Huaguo (无花果)".

The Spring /
Summer series
"MOsea"



While everyone else is chasing trends, Hao Daxiao (郝大小) and Yuan Xiaomo (袁小漠), as creators, choose to distance themselves from the "popular" and instead forge new waves and meanings.





*Summary and
Shortcomings*

04. Summary and Shortcomings



Summary

- In the history of Chinese literature, maritime imagery has long been closely associated with freedom.
- Yuan Xiaomo (袁小漠) 's protection of the "Mosea" garment amidst the flames in Paris can be seen as a defense of positive values such as authenticity, nature, and freedom.



Shortcomings

- The analysis of maritime imagery lacks both horizontal and vertical comparisons;
- Further enhancement is needed in the understanding and mastery of the theory.





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Thank you all for your listening



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