

Research paper on an analysis of the film the planet of the apes 1968

[Countries](#), [China](#)



\n[[Table of Contents](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [Introduction](#) \n \t
2. [Conclusion](#) \n \t
3. [Annotated Bibliography](#) \n \t
4. [Works Cited](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Introduction

‘The Planet of the Apes’ is an American science fiction film released in the year 1968. On the surface, the sci-fi film tells the tale of a post-apocalyptic universe where apes have evolved and essentially taken control of a world seemingly destroyed by human beings. However, a deeper analysis reveals that the film is charged with various political allegories about the social struggles and allegories of the time. The film explores serious issues including violence, race, religion, prejudice as well as the pathologies of power. The film is premised on a classic reversal of the slave-master relations, whereby humans are massively oppressed by an ape species that is more superior. In this case, humans are regarded as ignorant, dirty, smelly and whose basic intelligence is simply limited to mimicking the behavior of the apes. The humans are consequently, hunted, confined and exploited by the apes for both scientific research as well as for entertainment purposes. The Planet of the Apes is hugely comparable to political situations in the modern world where human oppression is rife. A classic example is China that has long been accused of violation of basic human rights. Just like

individuals in *The Planet of Apes* like Dr. Zaius crave for power and dominion over humans, the communist Chinese government is filled with similar minded individuals whose primary goal is to exert power and dominion over other human beings. These individuals exploit other human beings just like in *The Planet of Apes* for their own selfish benefits. They have no regard for their fellow humans and they, in fact, take away most of the rights of these humans including the most basic of these rights.

The history of oppression in China is well known and documented. However, it would not be proper to start the description of the nation in such negative light. Perhaps it would be wise to first look at some of its positive elements including the unity that the nation has managed to sustain throughout the years. However, this unity is not as real as it would outwardly appear. China was founded on one of the world's greatest civilization, and, in fact, Western scholars try to assert that modern China resembles the Europe of the Roman empire of the Charlemagne (Pye, 56). This 'Europe' has seemingly lasted up to today and is consequently trying to function as one single state. The fact the nation was founded one of the greatest civilizations that the world has ever seen has led to the durability and the inordinate strength of its political structure and culture. The Chinese rulers have felt an overpowering obligation to preserve or conserve the unity of their civilization. This has consequently meant that when it comes to the nation's cultural attitudes about authority and power, there is no compromise (Pye, 57). While there have been pragmatic considerations when it comes to other spheres of life in China, this has not transcended into the fundamental values that essentially determine the legitimacy basis of the states and that also govern the basic

relationship between the society and the state (Pye, 57). This has led to a situation whereby the state has exerted its control and dominance over the society through basic rights oppression, religious oppression amongst other forms of oppression (Yip, 34). Many humans in the nation are treated as inferiors whose total lives need to be controlled by the government (Pye, 57).

The Rise of the Planet of Apes is hugely synonymous to the situation in China in a couple of aspects. First, it appears that in this planet, it is not only the humans that are oppressed. Even the apes oppress their own kind. The ape world in The Planet of the Apes is made up of three different groups. There are orangutans, the chimpanzees and finally the gorillas (Booker, 100). In this system, it emerges that the apes do not occupy the same position in the society (Booker. 100). This is once again synonymous to the current situation in the modern world, specifically China. In the ape world, the orangutans occupy the highest positions of political power and authority. The chimpanzees, on the other hand, are the intellectuals and the scientists (Booker 100). Finally, the gorillas are manual laborers and the soldier. The gorillas are, therefore, in the lowest hierarchy of this chain (Greene, Eric and Slotkin, 31). This situation can be synonymized to the current Chinese political structure. The Orangutans are the Chinese communist leaders who continuously make oppressive laws. The Chinese middle and lower classes are the chimpanzees and the gorillas.

There are several scenes in the film that reveal that just like the hierarchies exist in the Chinese political culture, the Planet of the Apes has similar hierarchies. There is a particular conspicuous conflict between the

Orangutans who are depicted as officious and conservative and the chimpanzees who are more open minded and liberal(Booker, 101). In the introduction to section to the ape world, there is an instance where one of the chimpanzees treating the main character Taylor complains of having to work with dirty humans, which seemingly suggests that his work is that of a veterinarian (Booker, 101). He then asks his compatriot, Zira that she had made a promise to speak with their superior, Zaius, an Orangutan about a better position. To this, Zira responds, “ I did. You know how he looks down his nose at chimpanzees” (Booker, 101). This further shows the inexistence of equality in the society, similar to the Chinese situation. The male scientist suggest that the quota system has been abolished. This is a suggestion that this ape society had been even more socially stratified than it currently appears to be. It emerges that the chimpanzees had once been denied opportunities for status, jobs and even power through deliberate quotas (Greene, Eric and Slotkin, 31). He tries to prove his point by stating that Zira seems to be doing relatively well in acquiring resources and as well as space for her research. Zira, however, responds that the current success of her research process in terms of available resources is because their superior recognizes the need and importance of her research which will essentially lay the basic foundation for ‘ scientific brain surgery” (Booker, 101).

The above discussion reveals another aspect that is also hugely synonymous to the Chinese political and cultural structure. Just as the powerful apes do not spare their fellow apes, humans do not spare their humans. The gorillas are the workers while the Orangutans supervise their work (Greene, Eric and Slotkin, 30). They resemble the peasants in China who are forced to work

tirelessly by the Chinese communist leaders under an oppressive system of governance.

The ape world in the “ Planet of the Apes” features the denial of many rights to humans. As mentioned earlier, humans are regarded as ignorant, dirty, and smelly. The apes also believe that the human’s intelligence is simply limited to mimicking the behavior of the apes. The humans are consequently, hunted, confined and exploited by the apes for both scientific researchers as well as for entertainment purposes. Their activities are regulated, and any human show exhibits any sign of intelligence is immediately dealt with.

The perfect exemplification of this Taylor, the human in the film who challenges most of the norms of the ape society and is, therefore, seen as a threat. Dr. Zaius particularly sees Taylor as a troublesome character and constantly threatens him with lobotomization and castration (Booker, 100). In fact, a former colleague of Taylor, Landon, who were captured together with is revealed to have been lobotomized to hide his intelligence (Booker, 94). This is very synonymous to the situation in China. As explained earlier, there are some very powerful forces within the Chinese system who exert power and dominion over other people by enforcing their beliefs and norms. Whenever, a person from the lower class of the society emerges as intelligent and opposes, criticizes or questions the enacted norms, he is often seen as a threat. The Chinese government has been notoriously known for its non-tolerance on political opposition and the questioning of its beliefs and policies (Berlatsky, 50). In fact, history shows that there have been many political prisoners in China jailed over time, mostly because of their

opposition to the communist beliefs forced into people or their display of intelligence tendencies that the government sees as a threat (Berlatsky, 51).

Religious freedom is another aspect that is seemingly absent in the ape world. This is once again similar to the situation in China where people have been historically been denied of their right to practice the religion of their choice (Religious oppression and intolerance in China). Religious freedom means the right to worship any being and the right to conduct religious practice at any time and place without fear of persecution and prosecution. Religious freedom means religion diversity in a state whereby members who follow different religions live together in peace and give each other space to worship and abide by their specific religious doctrines.

The Chinese government has been relentlessly suppressing religious groups in the nation since it took over power in the year 1949 (Religious oppression and intolerance in China). Although, the tight restriction on religion seems to have been relaxed a little, non-registered religious groups in the nation have often been faced massive oppression in the nation. Many spiritual and religious groups in the nation have also been persecuted. In fact, the suppression of the government seems to transcend beyond religious groups and even into organizations that teach even basic things as gymnastic techniques and simple mediation (Religious oppression and intolerance in China). Just like the government was observed as suppressing intelligent individuals who questioned the communist government's beliefs, the government appears to be afraid of any national group and organization that has the capability to organize its followers to take any action. The

government's reasoning has been that religious groups are cults whose primary and essential goal is to upset the social order, disobey the law, and who through the guise of kindness and religion take part in political activities and sometimes even criminal activities such as tax fraud and evasion, smuggling, drug dealing, kidnapping and association (Religious oppression and intolerance in China). Consequently, the state is constantly raiding Catholic, Protestant and Buddhist centers of worship and making many arrests.

In *The Planet of the Apes*, there is an element of religious oppression although it is quite different from the one in China whereby religion is seemingly discouraged. In ape world, it seems like everyone is forced to believe in one religion, which significantly resembles Christianity. This is for instance proven by statement made by Dr. Zaius that "all apes were made in the image of God." Dr. Zaius views Taylor as a potential threat to this religious belief that has been so brilliantly enforced into the ape society. Zira claims that human beings preceded the existence of the apes but were wiped out by some mysterious illness or plague (Booker, 95). She accuses Zaius of having known this all along but concealing it. This resembles the story of evolution whereby man is believed to have evolved from apes. The evolution debate has often had a lot of backlash from the religious community, which has constantly maintained that man was made solely in the image of god, and there is nothing as evolution from apes. Dr. Zaius is proponent of the creation story and uses his religious belief to crush any proposition about the prior existence of man. For instance, at the Forbidden Zone scene, where one of the scientists, Cornelius had discovered ruins from

as assumed ancient civilization, Dr. Zaius forces him to read from the ape scripture, referred to as the Sacred Scrolls, which further seems to discredit man. This reading state that “ Beware the beast man, for he is the devil’s pawn. Alone among God’s primates, he kills for sport or lust or greed. Yea, he will murder his brother to possess his brother’s land. Let him not breed in great numbers, for he will make a desert of his home and yours, Shun him, drive hum back into the jungle lair, for he is the harbinger of death” (Booker, 95). The reading, therefore, seems to suggest that man is cursed in the eyes of God and apes should make sure that he is annihilated and not given a chance to breed or multiply.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of this film has helped me learn a lot. I have learnt how science fiction has been used to portray some of the aspects that exist in the society current. This particularly in regards to modern political structures and systems. The exploration of this essay has also helped to see how the happenings if the film can compare to those of China where a significant degree of oppression exists. I have also seen how humans are sarcastic beings because of their tendency to hide truths to get what they want to make people believe what they want. The topic has left me wishing that a world could exist where everyone would be treated equally and would have equal rights and freedoms.

Annotated Bibliography

Berlatsky, Noah. China. Detroit, MI: Greenhaven Press/Gale, Cengage Learning, 2010. Print.

<https://assignbuster.com/research-paper-on-an-analysis-of-the-film-the-planet-of-the-apes-1968/>

This book by Noah Berlatsky contains an overview of the Chinese nation including its culture, social, economic and political system. It looks at the historical development of the nation in terms of these aspects. The book also looks at the standing of China in the modern world. This book will be important to my research, as it will provide me with sufficient information about the Chinese nation as a whole from which I can then make useful deductions in terms of ideologies comparable to those in “The Planet of the Apes”.

Booker, M K. *Alternate Americas: Science Fiction Film and American Culture*. Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2006. Print.

This book provides a comprehensive analysis of science fiction film making in the Hollywood. It analyzes the major science fiction blockbusters that have been made throughout the years. One of these is *The Planet of the Apes*. The book provides looks at the film from a variety of angles including the plot, the characters, the cast and crew and more importantly the social and political implications and ideologies that emanate from the film and that are comparable to the modern world. This article will be useful, as it will provide me with relevant information on how the film represents some of the ideologies of the modern world.

Greene, Eric, and Richard Slotkin. *Planet of the Apes As American Myth: Race, Politics, and Popular Culture*. Hanover, N. H: Wesleyan University Press, 1998. Print.

This source by Eric Green and Richard Slotkin contains one of the most conclusive analyses of *The Planet of the Apes* films. It looks at the background of the film, the film’s production process, its cast and crew and

<https://assignbuster.com/research-paper-on-an-analysis-of-the-film-the-planet-of-the-apes-1968/>

its major themes. The source also looks at how themes in the films are synonymous to some of the elements of the modern world including racism, political oppression, and social hierarchy system amongst others. This source will be useful as it will furnish me with information about the films background and themes and will consequently help to derive the relationship between it and the modern political and social structure.

Pye, Lucian W. "China: Erratic State, Frustrated Society." *Foreign Affairs* 69. 4 (1990): 56-74. Academic Search Premier. Web. 28 May 2014

This article looks at the relationship of China with the United States and discusses how China often seems to lag behind in modifying itself into the ways of the modern world especially in terms of political freedom and democracy. It looks at how this prompts nations such as the United States to act as the teachers of China to show it the relationship between the state or the government and the people should be. The source will be of great aid when I am looking at how China's political system is not congruent with the other political systems of the world especially in regards to the oppression that the system exerts on people.

"Religious oppression and intolerance in China." All about religious tolerance: the ReligiousTolerance.org web site. 2014. 29 May 2014

This website explores various religious issues. In this particular webpage, the history of religious freedom in China is given. It shown that China consistently suppressed religious freedom in the country. The article will come in handy when I am talking oppression in China in form of religious oppression.

Yip, Kam-Shing. *Pedagogy of Power, Oppression and Empowerment: A*

Chinese Cultural Articulation. Hauppauge, N. Y: Nova Science Publishers, 2012. Print.

This book provides a comprehensive analysis of the Chinese political system with particular focus on its oppressive communist system. It looks at the power implementation system of the nation and how this system essentially deprives people their rights to truth and knowledge and where their ways of thinking and living are modified to fit with needs and the control of the central government. This book will help in understanding more about the commits system in China, and its oppressive policies on the people of China, especially the denial of some of most basic human freedoms.

Works Cited

Berlatsky, Noah. China. Detroit, MI: Greenhaven Press/Gale, Cengage Learning, 2010. Print.

Booker, M K. Alternate Americas: Science Fiction Film and American Culture. Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2006. Print.

Greene, Eric, and Richard Slotkin. Planet of the Apes As American Myth: Race, Politics, and Popular Culture. Hanover, N. H: Wesleyan University Press, 1998. Print.

Pye, Lucian W. " China: Erratic State, Frustrated Society." Foreign Affairs 69. 4 (1990): 56-74. Academic Search Premier. Web. 28 May 2014

" Religious oppression and intolerance in China." All about religious tolerance: the ReligiousTolerance. org web site. 2014. 29 May 2014

Yip, Kam-Shing. Pedagogy of Power, Oppression and Empowerment: A

Chinese Cultural Articulation. Hauppauge, N. Y: Nova Science Publishers, 2012. Print.