

The Emperor's New Groove and Disney: adaptation or invention?

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The Emperor's New Groove is an animated Disney film released in 2000. It is a unique cartoon that blends the culture of Incan civilization and modern America. The fact is that the word "Inca" is never uttered in the entire film[3]. Disney uses Incan visual elements such as architecture, clothing, and setting without deep analysing of people and their history. It allows the studio to avoid responsibility for authenticity and distort historical facts and religious beliefs for the sake of humor.

The main example of such mix of cultures (American and Incan) is the main character, Kuzco. He is presented as the ruler of the Inca Empire. However, his behavior seems unusual if we compare it with traditions of Inca. According to historical facts, the leader of the society was considered a direct descendant of the Sun god Inti. His authority was based on divine power and the faith of the people. Despite his absolute power, the Sapa Inca was expected to perform the same daily tasks as his subjects. For example, he had to ceremonially shear the first llama or plant the first potato tuber, working in the field alongside his children[1]. This ritual symbolized the leader's connection to the land and his people. On the contrary Kuzco is depicted as a lazy, indifferent leader who mocks sacred traditions and cares only about his own interests, such as building a summer pool called "Kuzcotopia" over a village. This contrast highlights how the sacred role of the divine ruler is replaced with a modern stereotype of a spoiled celebrity.

Another discrepancy between the Inca culture and the cartoon is the characters' clothing. In particular, Kuzco's outfit is more modern. He wears Spanish-style shoes and a modern cape instead of the traditional mascapaicha headpiece and authentic Incan garments[2].

Furthermore, the film shows character duality. There is a contrast between Pacha and Kuzco. Pacha represents the Incan concept of communal duty, family, and harmony with nature. Kuzco, on the other hand, embodies a westernized, individualistic, and selfish ego. Their journey is an opportunity for Kuzco to learn the values of the culture he is supposed to represent.

Nevertheless, there are some important references to original culture. For instance, Kuzco and Pacha are names with a special meaning as they have a strong bond with mythology. Kuzco in Quechua means "navel" or "center of the world". The name Pacha refers to "earth", "world", or "space". This is significant because the Incas believed in three distinct planes of existence: Uku Pacha (the underworld for the dead), Kay Pacha (the world of living humans), and Hanan Pacha (the "upper world" for the gods, the Apus (mountain spirits), and the souls of dead Inca emperors). So the name "Pacha" was given to the protagonist, who embodies balance and tradition, for good reason. We believe that Kuzco, whose name means "center", must learn to become the true moral and spiritual center of his kingdom thanks to his interaction with Pacha by the end of the film.

The Inca Empire had a special system of compulsory labor called Mita, where adult men were required to work for the benefit of the entire community. They built roads, bridges, temples, and other structures, and also served in the army. However, this form of government was based

on the principle of equality. While a man performed his duties, his family was provided for by the community.

The state fed and provided for the workers, and also organized celebrations in gratitude for their labor. The cartoon shows the spirit and aesthetics of pre-Columbian Peru. This is reflected in the most obvious aspects: architecture, clothing, and the general atmosphere. The emperor of Cuzco lives in a huge palace, like Inca buildings. The inhabitants of this empire, including Pacho and his family, wear simple clothes. Consequently, we can see the contrast between the world of the elite and the world of ordinary people.

Let's focus on a minor character - waitress named Mata at Madka's Meat Shack. Her name is a direct reference. The name "Mata" comes from the Quechua word "mit'a." Although Mata is just a waitress, the etymology of her name refers to the common people whose labor (mita) supported the Inca state. While Mata's name refers to the realities of the Incas, the image of the main villain, Iza, on the contrary, is completely fictional. Patriarchal power was developing in the Inca Empire.

The head of state was the Sapa Inca (emperor), and all key administrative and religious positions were held exclusively by men, usually from his noble family. Women played an important but strictly defined role in Inca society. They could be priestesses, but did not hold high office. The image of Iza - a cunning, powerful woman who effectively ruled the empire and planned to kill the emperor to seize the throne - was absolutely impossible in the real Inca Empire. This is pure fantasy, which the creators of the cartoon used for comic effect, ignoring historical realities.

To sum up, we would like to conclude that the film "The Emperor's New Groove" is more of a reinterpretation of culture than an adaptation of it. Disney takes the vivid aesthetics of the Incas (architecture, clothing, individual words) as a backdrop, but completely links it to the laws of comedy and its own plots, without worrying about historical accuracy.

Источники и литература

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