

"A Little Red Flower": Life Struggle from the Perspective of Positive Psychology

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ABSTRACT

Taking the life trajectories of two anti-cancer families as the background, taking the interpretation of the love story of a pair of young man and woman suffering from cancer as the storyline, the movie "A Little Red Flower" brings forth new ideas and shows the spirit of struggle for life when individuals, families and groups face death from the perspective of realism. Based on positive psychology, this article uses the movie "A Little Red Flower" as the text to explore the life struggle core and narrative expression of sentient beings from the perspective of positive psychology and summarizes it into three levels: the positive and optimistic personal struggle, the concerted family struggle, and the collective struggle of helping and supporting each other. This being-towards-death and positive life struggle is not only a shining point of humanity, but also the spiritual root and source of strength for all mankind to seek happiness.

Keywords: Positive psychology, "A Little Red Flower", Life struggle.

1. INTRODUCTION

The movie "A Little Red Flower" doesn't follow the traditional "sick youth" genre. Although it puts the heavy theme of death on the screen, it is because of its refusing of set pattern and fresh and refined realistic observation, it captures people's hearts. The director of this movie is very ingenious and skilled in details. His positive and optimistic emotional keynote and the meaning elaboration of ultimate care make the movie not only have an emotional resonance with the audience, but also have a positive effect that is thought-provoking, reflective and inspiring. As Chuang Tzu said: "Any business with a promising future, however negligible at its inception, is bound to grow immensely by the time it is completed" [1], in a nutshell, the root of this effect lies in the fact that the spirit of life struggle demonstrated by the movie coincides with the value connotation of positive psychology.

2. POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY THAT ILLUMINATES HUMAN NATURE

2.1 The Origin and Connotation of Positive Psychology

Positive psychology originated in the 1930s, took Terman's discussion of genius and marital happiness and Jung's research on the meaning of life as its starting point [2], with American psychologist Seligman in the late 20th century as its formal advocate and founder. Positive psychology pays attention to the positive aspects of human nature with scientific methods and principles, advocates the positive orientation of psychology, pays attention to the positive psychological qualities of human beings, explores the positive potential of human nature, and devotes to seeking human health and well-being and harmonious development, with its ultimate concern of "making life more meaningful". Positive psychology believes that the healthy mental function lies in "construction" rather than "repair". It advocates the shaping of positive psychological qualities and healthy behavior patterns based on the advantages and values of human nature through the positive

emotional experience of individuals and the good influence of family, community, and social culture.

2.2 *The Value Path and Visual Presentation of Positive Psychology*

There are three main value paths in positive psychology. The first path is to construct an optimistic attitude toward the future and loyalty to life through positive and rich subjective experiences such as happiness, satisfaction, and hope. This path advocates an active narrative linking of the past, present and future of life, so that the individual can reach such a state: When looking back on the past, one can actively integrate personal history and feel happy and satisfied; when facing the present, one can grasp and handle various relationships with society and feel happy and contented; when looking forward to the future, one can achieve "realistic optimism" — a kind of optimism that avoids blindness and bases itself on reality without self-deceiving. The second path is to build positive personality traits by strengthening and stimulating the various realistic and potential abilities of the individual, and it is pointed out that the best strategy for cultivating these positive qualities is to provide and enhance the individual's positive emotional experience. The third path is to promote the internalization of individual positive psychological qualities through positive and healthy social environmental influences. Individuals' families, schools, and groups can all play a positive role in supporting and helping children grow up healthily and achieve self-realization. It is worth pointing out that there are cultural differences in the judgment of life satisfaction. In a personal-centered cultural environment, satisfaction mainly depends on personal emotional reference, and one's own regular happiness feelings are used as an important sign of satisfaction. However, in a collective-centered cultural environment, individual satisfaction mainly depends on the standard reference — the social orientation of family, classmates, friends, and teams will be fully considered.

The positive care of human nature and rich value connotation in positive psychology, on the one hand, have been accurately, comprehensively and profoundly interpreted through the life struggle spirit condensed in the movie "A Little Red Flower" and have been successfully visibly presented through the art form of movie on the other hand.

3. THE LIFE STRUGGLE TO FACE DEATH DIRECTLY

The movie "A Little Red Flower" directly brings death closer to the audience through cancer and stages a life-and-death duel beyond love. The director uses Husserl's phenomenology to show the audience Heidegger's struggling spirit of "being-towards-death" in a three-dimensional manner. Specifically, this spirit can be summarized as a positive and optimistic personal struggle spirit, a concerted family struggle spirit, and a collective struggle spirit of helping and supporting each other.

3.1 *Positive and Optimistic Personal Struggle Spirit*

Through the successful portrayal of Wei Yihang, Ma Xiaoyuan, Wei Jiang, Tao Hui, Wu Xiaomei and other characters, the movie outlines a vivid picture of the characters fighting for their lives for the audience and fully carries forward the humanity light of positive psychology, interpreting a positive mental journey of life struggle.

It consciously transforms the optimistic spiritual image of the subconsciousness and uses the positive strength of human nature to provide spiritual nourishment for life struggle. The beginning of the movie reproduces the scene of the male protagonist Wei Yihang undergoing brain tumor surgery two years ago: thickly dotted, differently sized and black and white brain tumor radiography, surgical shadowless lamps, drainage tubes...all indicate that this is a dangerous operation. In conjunction with the male protagonist's monologue, the movie explains the possible sequelae to the audience, thus showing the great pressure, helplessness and fear of the future that the male protagonist is facing. Then, the scene changes abruptly. When the narrator's father Wei Jiang is engaged in sculpting works, the male protagonist makes a humorous statement: "Wandering wildly between the artwork and the scene of the car accident", "To show the uncanny workmanship of nature with his own power", with lively and nifty background music. Along with Wu Xiaomei's hurried appearance, Wei Yihang jokes and refers Wu Xiaomei, the anti-cancer group owner, as "mom's number one spy" and "the soup king of the chicken soup for the soul"... At this point, the director has not only established the realism background of the whole movie, but also laid out the emotional keynote of being optimistic, positive and upward. This contrast greatly dilutes the heaviness and depression preset in the

beginning of the movie, thus reflecting the positive and optimistic subconscious image of the male protagonist. Wei Yihang's personal life struggle is full of twists and turns, and his self is deeply locked in cancer. He fears the future and his self-worth is gradually dissolving. He closes his heart, rejects kindness, and ignores beauty; he always speaks rudely, is always afraid of being noticed by others, doesn't want to connect with anyone, and doesn't want to be sincere... In the final analysis, all this is because he is afraid that his heart will be killed instantly by death. It is not difficult to find that the cancer brings him not only physical pain, but also the crumbling of his spiritual world. In this regard, he adopts a passive escape to conduct psychological defenses, through a negative self-identification model, which is also a self-protection model emphasized by positive psychology, to help himself reduce self-request to avoid greater disappointment. It is only when he meets Ma Xiaoyuan and encounters love that this model begins to transform in a positive way, realizing the journey of spiritual transformation from the "mourning state" of pessimism, self-deprecation, and anxiety and closure to the "sacred state" of optimism, self-determination, and bravery and firmness.

The transformation and growth and decline of positive and negative strength in human nature demonstrate the spirit of personal struggle for life. The movie revolves around the male protagonist's body and "mourning words and deeds," to carry out a multidimensional narrative, showing the male protagonist's pessimistic and humble state of autism and a modicum of spirit of unwillingness to lose, indirectly demonstrating the strong sense of struggling and spirit of struggling deep in his heart. Wei Yihang's life struggle breaks out in his love with the heroine Ma Xiaoyuan. Through the confession of love in the rain, the movie presents the self-determination of the male protagonist to the audience, and through the positive subjective happiness experience, the male protagonist opens his heart and undoes his heart knots. This is an inner release and spiritual liberation that transcends the confession of love. The male protagonist also wins the first little red flower, a spiritual badge with value and meaning, in his life because of his "first-time proactive move in his life".

The dual ability of cognition and love [3] is constructed as a spiritual arm of personal life struggle. Wei Yihang, whose firm ice of soul is melted by love, continues his proactive move for the first time in his life. A series of "in-situ, high-copy and poor travel adventure" activities seem to

be self-entertainment for boys and girls. From Gansbaai Beach in South Africa at the seafood market to the Dead Sea in the reservoir of the car repairing shop to the Venezuelan Angel Falls in the Fountain Square... Ma Xiaoyuan brings a strong positive emotional experience to the male protagonist through her creative activities, which strongly infects the male protagonist. And through her counter-transference, Ma Xiaoyuan succeeds in inspiring the male protagonist's potential to know and love. In the construction of cognitive ability, the fear of cancer causes the male protagonist to fall into the "causal bias" of cognition, leading to a series of negative cognition methods. However, with the efforts of Ma Xiaoyuan, he gradually changes and abandons this negative model and replaces it with a reasonable positive cognition mode, and realizes recognition and acceptance under the catalysis of continuous positive emotions. Correspondingly, the male protagonist also learns the ability to "love" and "be loved" at the same time. Relying on unconstrained poor travel in situ, she successfully expands the space of love and being loved of the male protagonist. It is through such a positive mental journey that the movie demonstrates the brave fighting and the final counterattack against the disease: this kind of fighting breaks through the finiteness of the body, removes the inner shackles, illuminates the human nature and emotions, and sublimates the spiritual self. Wei Yihang completes his inner transformation. He incarnates as Ma Xiaoyuan, turning the negative "self-confrontation" and "interpersonal resistance" into positive "reluctance to part" and "deep concern". The negativity, avoidance, humbleness, and fear of the past have become bravery, firmness and resolution, independence and altruism. In particular, the plot of his online purchase of rice with braised beef for the father, a migrant worker, who lost his beloved daughter in the name of his daughter fully demonstrates his complicated and tortuous mental transformation process, also pushing the male protagonist's positive and optimistic personal struggle spirit to a climax.

Positive personality traits form the cornerstone of belief in the personal life struggle. From the beginning of the movie, the heroine Ma Xiaoyuan is endowed with positive personality traits of positivity and optimism, enthusiasm and liveliness, kindness and perseverance, and cleverness and astuteness. Through the vivid image building, smooth and natural plot arrangement, and concise and lively rhythm setting, the movie successfully

agitates the heroine's life attitude and spirit of resistance through time and space. In response to the "mourning" of Wei Yihang, the heroine uses creativity and tries her best to criticize, educate, and guide in a combination of measures, using her love, patience and perseverance to help Wei Yihang out of the gloom of his soul. Particularly, she ingeniously directs the "in-situ poor travel" expedition project and rewards Wei Yihang with the first little red flower in his life... Through a series of plot arrangements, the movie obstinately rises from the cruel realism background to pure romanticism. Ma Xiaoyuan is like a master of positive psychology therapy. She reactivates and restores Wei Yihang's dying ability to recognize and love, and heals Wei Yihang's life's "mourning". However, she herself dies from the recurrence of brain cancer, and when she leaves the world, she is spotlessly clean, smiling like a flower. Ma Xiaoyuan is the nemesis of psychological cancer. Her fighting spirit is like a streak of light, reaching the depths of the heart, illuminating and warming people's hearts.

3.2 Concerted Family Struggle Spirit

Positive psychology believes that the family environment has a huge impact on people. In the interaction between people and the environment, positive psychological qualities can be internalized in the heart and externalized in action. The movie takes the realism as the perspective and the family as the ecological unit, and through the interpretation of the subtle interaction between the "family big self" and the "individual small self", [4] it not only explains the positive healing function of the family itself, but also shows that the life-and-death confrontation with cancer is a collaborative struggle of the family that transcends the individual. The film shows a silent struggle through a realistic portrayal of the family environment. The director performs a spatio-temporal scan through natural color light: the old wood-colored furniture, the slightly cramped space, the yellowish and low-light lights in the living room, bedroom, kitchen, and toilet, the refrigerator and TV with a sense of the age, the lame dining table and the plain and neat tablecloth... However, on the second floor of the car repairing shop where Ma Xiaoyuan grew up, the room is clean but messy, and the furniture is simple and outdated, which is placed randomly. This realistic scene of realism is actually a kind of silent narration, which demonstrates the unyielding and resistant life through metaphors for people. It is worth mentioning that the character Lao Ma in the

movie is a father who can play magic. His childish disposition remains. For more than ten years, he has used a car repairing shop to support his family and treat his daughter's illness. Naughtiness and magic are the habit and magic weapon for him and his daughter to stick together and help each other in difficulties, and at the same time it demonstrates his deep paternal love for his daughter and his anxious expectation for miracles. The father and daughter are hand in hand to fight with fate in this model, and Ma Xiaoyuan's positive and optimistic spirit of life struggle is also born from this.

Wisdom is one of the core qualities of positive psychology and it is also a way to deal with worldly problems. In the movie, Tao Hui, the male protagonist's mother, is a wise mother as the name suggests. She is good at life calculations, but because of her son's illness, her promotion is delayed and her life theme is re-framed accordingly. But the husband Wei Jiang, who is full of humor, has no time to treat his stomach illness and drives a tailored taxi to make money. And Wei Jiang's mother and younger brother all give a helping hand. This traditional big family spirit makes Wei Jiang cover his face and weep, and the male protagonist is also deeply impressed and makes a bow for a long time. This kind of spirit of refusing to give up and the concerted family style are not only the source of strength for life struggle, but also the spiritual soil to influence, inspire and lead Wei Yihang's growth. Following the conflict and reconciliation between Wei Yihang and his parents in the movie, especially through the plot of Wei Jiang and his wife filming a weekend one-day video, they can understand each other and learn to understand, tolerate, be brave and cherish. This kind of narrative of mutual growth in mutual running-in endows the movie with corresponding educational value. In addition, the movie also demonstrates this kind of family struggle spirit by portraying other characters. For example, the migrant worker, Lao Lv, who is also a father, Wu Xiaomei, the group owner of the patient group, the granny waiting for the rain to stop, and Xiao Zhang, the deaf-mute man for takeaway, etc. They represent not only themselves, but families who are fighting bravely. In Ma Xiaoyuan's words, they are all "fighting with life to the end". The movie exactly uses sufficient audio-visual means to help the audience understand the story, care for the characters, and invest in emotions, [5] using phenomenological techniques to truly restore the spirit of "fighting to the end" of sentient beings. Spreading the spirit of family struggle into the

hearts of the audience in a silent way will certainly bring deep reflection and useful enlightenment to the audience.

3.3 Collective Struggle Spirit of Helping and Supporting Each Other

"A Little Red Flower" is permeated with the spirit of collective struggle for life, depicting a scene of collective struggle to help and support each other for the audience. This collective struggle transcends individuals and consanguine families. The movie doesn't adopt a traditional grand narrative, but is successfully displayed through the patient group led by Wu Xiaomei. Through clever plot arrangements and character shaping, the director obstinately let the breath of death overflow the passion of life. The patient group in the movie brings together cancer patients from all over the world. Regardless of people of all ages and both sexes, regardless of the rich, the poor, the noble, and the lowly, they speak different dialects and tell different stories. They are connected in mind and caring for each other. The movie successfully interprets the righteous feelings and chivalrous spirit of the group owner Wu Xiaomei. He leaves his native place with a special identity and deeply hides the truth about the suicide of his beloved wife, but he continues his wife's career with kindheartedness to support patients as a spiritual haven. A moment like this is just like Wu Xiaomei's name: "Know the samādhi of life and death". Through Wu Xiaomei, the movie presents an image of a social leader who is full of altruistic spirit and stands up for collective struggle to different genders [6]. Specifically, the movie mainly shows the collective struggle of the patient group in three activities, namely "A Kou's farewell party", "Teacher Zhang Hesong's sharing session" and "Wu Xiaomei's pre-departure parting party". The extraordinary farewell party of A Kou is based on the theme of mourning the loss of life, which interprets the spirit of collective life struggle; teacher Zhang Hesong's sharing session with mixed feelings interprets the spirit of life struggle deep in his heart with the theme of the present of life, and the passionate Wu Xiaomei's parting party interprets the collective spirit of life struggle with the promising future. In addition, the movie also reflects the interweaving of this collective relationship by designing the "marriage" between the families of patients. Because Wei Yihang confessed to Ma Xiaoyuan in the rain, Wei Jiang and his wife quickly become good friends with Lao Ma, and the two families immediately form an anti-

cancer alliance. Together with the migrant worker Lao Lv and his daughter Meimei, the granny waiting for the rain to stop, and Xiao Zhang, the deaf-mute man for takeaway, etc., the movie brings together different images of cancer patients, presenting the audience with a collective web of struggling for life. It even expresses the true meaning of the spirit of collective struggle through Wu Xiaomei's words: "Our group, if gathered, it will be a ball of fire. If scattered, it will be stars all over the sky".

What is quite meaningful is that the director ingeniously paints the entire flock of sheep at the end of the movie with small red flowers, and marks the eye-catching small red flowers on every part of the beginning and the end of the movie. Accompanied by the deep and warm theme song, the little red flower has turned into a warm spiritual seal. In the face of the common disaster, the patients give each other a small red flower to cover the newly added scars and set off for the future actively. [7]

4. CONCLUSION

The disease will not disappear, and the struggle will continue. In the context of the global fight against the epidemic and the joint construction of a community with a shared future for all mankind, whether it is the positive and optimistic personal struggle, or the concerted family struggle, even the collective struggle of helping and supporting each other, the positive spirit of struggle and rich connotations contained in them will surely be the spiritual root and source of strength for the pursuit of happiness for all mankind. This is not only the value mission of the movie "A Little Red Flower", but also the ultimate care of positive psychology.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

This paper is independently completed by Changwei Gong.

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