

# “Tame” the Masses: The Second Construction of China’s New War Films in Multiple Spaces

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## ABSTRACT

Since its inception, movies have received wide attention and popular love from all walks of life. With the development of the entire film industry and the generational changes in the mainstream of the popular aesthetic consciousness, Chinese war-themed movies have different visual presentations and theme expressions. "New" refers to the different evolution of the film under the influence of multiple spaces. With the changes in heavy industry films, new film technology and public demand, China’s New War Films have been re-constructed in multiple spaces, and they have begun to turn to spectacle narratives and cross-domain expressions, satisfying the reasonable imagination of the public, but also jumping out of the relative rigidity of the past "framework expression". In addition, this paper will focus on the two aspects of "the evolution of violence aesthetics under the influence of the voice of modern images" and "the establishment of a cultural value system under the theory of ideological state apparatus", focusing on how the China’s New War Films "tames" the public, and in cross-cultural exchanges, the national culture is successfully connected with the world’s multiculturalism and the introverted national cultural self-confidence is established, and even the goal of "anti-war" and reflection on war are achieved.

**Keywords:** *New War Films, violent aesthetics, mainstream ideology*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With the development of the times, influenced by factors such as cultural environment and audio-visual technology. In the film market in recent years, China’s New War Films China’s new war films are on the rise, which integrate the characteristics of cross-fields, spectacle narratives, serving the superstructure, showing the spirit of the times and national characteristics.

## 2. THE SECONDARY CONSTRUCTION AND NEW INTERPRETATION OF VIOLENCE AESTHETICS AT THE LEVEL OF MODERN VIDEO LANGUAGE

Violence aesthetics mainly uses human senses, through unconventional violence, exaggerated violence, etc., and uses unique aesthetic methods to present pictures, so as to highlight the brutal side of human nature and related violent behaviors. It pays great attention to the beauty of rituals, and presents different aesthetic states and social effects.

In the development of China’s New War Films, the film has changed the situation where it was completely controlled by the main theme and the red frame. At the audiovisual level, it emphasizes reality, simulation and even 1:1 restoration of the wartime state. For example, in the film "*Wolf Warriors II*" When *Leng Feng*, played by *Wu Jing*, was shopping in a Chinese supermarket in Africa, he was suddenly attacked by local armed terrorists. In that shootout, the film used a large number of motion cameras and panorama, close-up, close shot and other scenes to show the state of emergency during the war. When the bullet is shot at the crowd, you can clearly see the golden line of the bullet flying past on the screen, the serial shooting of the submachine gun, the small golden bullet mist appears when the bullet is rubbed by the ballistic gunpowder, and the cap on the back of the head of a soldier fell off when he was hit by the bullet, blood flowed, and another soldier flew out with his right arm directly after being shot. This real scene full of violence and cruelty is exactly a kind of immersive wartime state restoration.

In the movie "*OPERATION RED SEA*", when the terrorists sent the threatening video to the Chinese

military, it directly showed the whole process of the French male partner being cut off the neck. The cruel and bloody scenes of the war were brought to the screen and brought to the audience. The most intuitive visual impact is to show the real wartime state in a seemingly violent way, and can trigger the audience to actively think about war.

The diversified cultural environment of today's society provides a broader space for the development of military movies. In the grand war scenes and the deeper human civilization collision, the violent aesthetics uses more and more real visual effects and more and more intense audiovisual effects. Technology has pushed the violent writing of war to a climax and has also found a reasonable path for the entertaining expression of military movies. For military movies, the violent lifting of the ban is an opportunity to explore entertainment and popularization. [2] The use of violent aesthetics in the new war films can strengthen the image perception on the one hand, and the scenes that stimulate the bloody and violent scenes satisfy the audience's curiosity and curiosity, and reproduce the bloody and tragic of the war; the special aesthetic tension also re-constructs the aesthetics of violence under the level of modern video language, combining the current Chinese mainstream values and mainstream ideology and modern public aesthetics, and becomes a Chinese-style aesthetics of violence, thus presenting real war stories. Increase credibility and screen tension.

In the movie *"The Eight Hundred"*, the opening is a scene in which the Japanese army used a knife to slash the heads of Chinese people. This scene was too real and caused controversy as "unsuitable for children" and was labelled as "bloody". In this scene, when the Japanese army beheaded, the image presented was a large and massive blood flow. "Most of the effects of blood spray appear in the wound opening of the injured artery, but the arterial injury must also be distinguished whether it is completely ruptured or partially ruptured. When it is completely ruptured, the lumen will be narrowed due to muscle contraction, which will prevent part of the blood from flowing out; when it is partially ruptured, the lumen will be narrowed. It will not narrow, and the blood will spew out or flow out in large quantities under the action of pressure. When the head is completely cut off, the blood effect created is a large amount of blood flow, which is based on the principle of real professional bloodstain morphology analysis"[3].

In the movie *"The Sacrifice"*, *Zhang Yi*, the soldier who fired artillery shells, played *Zhang Fei*. When a US bomber broke his right leg and arm, there was a close shot of *Zhang Yi* leaning on a wooden stick and only half of his left leg was left. In terms of character modeling, the trouser legs of the left trousers were rotten after being bombed, and the edges were covered with blood, and the blasted leg muscles were faintly visible. The picture was

full of cruel and bloody war, and even caused discomfort. This is actually the secondary construction of violent aesthetics at the level of modern video language, using video methods to present the original bloody and cruel images to the audience truly and directly, plus modern special effects makeup, screen projection technology, shooting, editing technology, etc. Through the visual influence of the audience's psychology, let the original meaning of violent aesthetics add a direct post-war reflection complex on this basis, in order to achieve a kind of anti-war purpose enlightenment function.

"The evolution of the violent aesthetics of Chinese military movies is not only a technological development in the historical dimension, but also an artistic evolution in the conceptual dimension. From documentary representation of war to political representation of war, to the exploration and imagination of war violence and entertainment, in different social and historical contexts, the aesthetic concepts of military films have changed, and their aesthetic methods, aesthetic standards and aesthetics Purposes have acquired new characteristics in the changing times"[2]. And in the process of its evolution, the aesthetics of violence combined with the multiple contexts of the current Chinese new war films, combined with the general characteristics of modern public aesthetics. As the scholar *Chen Xuguang* said, "The director must adapt to the new living environment of industrialized survival, networked survival, technological survival, etc." [7], which means that in today's film market, it is actually required that such films learn to use modern imaging technology, combined with modern imaging language, to apply the aesthetics of violence in China, especially in war films with mainstream ideology and theme.

In principle, this theme runs counter to the concept of violent aesthetics to dissolve the subject. The two are contradictory, but they achieve the purpose of reproducing war scenes on the image level, and achieve an unexpected but reasonable sense of harmony. So as to realize the grand requirements and anti-war admonitions of the China's New War Films in the image narration, and also make the violence aesthetics under the influence of the China's New War Films use modern image technology to re-construct and make a new interpretation.

### **3. THE CONSTRUCTION OF CULTURAL VALUE SYSTEM UNDER THE THEORY OF IDEOLOGICAL STATE APPARATUS**

Ideology is, at a certain level, a collective imagination of its own ecological conditions. This imagination exists only as a seemingly empty idea, and more importantly, as a kind of motivation, a kind of urging people to survive in order to survive. The survival motivation for the transformation, especially when faced with the complex social and international background, the role of ideology becomes more important. For this reason, French scholar

Althusser proposed “*Ideological State Apparatuses*” (ISAs). He believed that “the special function of ideology is examined from the perspective of labor reproduction, and the problem is pushed to the subject's self-construction. Pushing to the question of the enlightenment function of the state apparatus and social institutions” means that not only through the compulsory and repressive state apparatus, but also through the cultural level ideological state apparatus such as art, education, the role of ideology can be exerted.

“The spread of consumerism and historical nihilism makes people born in peaceful times not obsessed with history, but pay more attention to the present and reality” [5], which means that movies need to play their leading role as popular culture. In addition to the narrative on the video, the China’s New War Films is more important to borrow the state apparatus and play the role of ideology in order to construct a cultural value system in line with Chinese characteristics and development. “Our previous war films were too limited to the war itself: the strategy of the war, the course of the battle, the fight on the battlefield, and the celebration after the war. But just forgot that war is essentially a kind of life — a special kind of life. Life in a state must highlight the meaning of life embodied in the value of life” [1]. The use of the state apparatus is to tame people through the use of image methods, so that they can seek some kind of inconsistency from the level of self-cognition and the level of war concepts. A balanced state of conspiracy is used to achieve the goals of anti-war and demonstrating the responsibilities and responsibilities of major powers. This coincides with the scholar Jing Jing's view that “in film art, images, as a flowing “mirror”, can also give the audience a psychology of identification” [6].

Under such ideological state apparatus theory, China’s New War Films start from the cultural and educational level, and explain the national ethics behind the film to achieve common social recognition. For example, in “*The Sacrifice*”, the soldiers persistently rebuilt the bridge after the continuous bombing, praising the beauty of human nature and the indomitable spirit of the Chinese nation; in “*OPERATION RED SEA*”, the 8-member group of the Chinese Navy “Jiaolong Commando” was ordered to carry out the retreat. The fearlessness and sacrificial spirit of the overseas Chinese mission demonstrates the country’s respect and care for individual lives; “*Wolf Warriors II*” also demonstrates China’s right to speak and assume responsibility in international affairs; the narrative logic of the new war film is fundamentally Promote mainstream ideology.

As a kind of soft power, culture is one of the commonly used methods in modern warfare today, and the country's soft power is obtained by acquiring cultural status. The ideological state apparatus is a kind of regulation on the spiritual level. When the audience, as a subject, is “inquired” by the film as an educational tool,

the audience cannot refuse, unless he can be higher than the educational institution. The new war film uses this “inquiry” to inject ideology into the film, and it becomes an embedded cultural value concept. Moreover, the value concepts of “peace, justice, freedom, responsibility, courage, and fearlessness” shown in the film just weaken the top-down coerciveness and rigidity of the state apparatus itself, giving the film the cultural value it wants to present. The concept is more forgiving, softening its edges and corners, thereby inspiring the pride and patriotism of the audience as citizens, so as to achieve the purpose of constructing a cultural value system.

“Because of the regulation of the attributes of the new mainstream movies, the spectacle voice of military action movies not only reflects the characteristics of genre and visual effects, but also has the symbolic function of national symbols, and is responsible for the synergistic narrative logic to complete the symbolic confirmation of the actual culture and value system[4]”. Under the interpretation of the theory of the ideological state apparatus, China’s New War Films can not only convey universal values through the film, but also better help the construction of cultural value system due to the particularity of its imaging methods. Just as the scholar Yang Junlei mentioned “showing the Chinese position and value in the narrative of justice”[8], and put China in the international The right to speak and responsibility in affairs, the love and respect for individuals, and the observance and maintenance of the international order are shown, building a new cultural value system that is in line with the public.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

In general, China’s New War Films have also ushered in a new life under the evolution of modern industrial civilization and the mainstream ideology of the masses. Instead of their previous performance limited to the red political framework, the new war films have not only realized the spectacle narrative and transcendence. Field expression, at the same time, the evolution of violent aesthetics and the strengthening of mainstream ideology can use video methods to “tame” and “inquire” people, so that they can seek some kind from the level of self-recognition and the level of war concepts. A coincident balance is used to achieve the goal of anti-war in the modern war concept. The dissolution of the traditional war narrative concept under the influence of modern and post-modern thought makes the war film re-constructed in a multi-dimensional space, thus reappearing in the posture of the China’s New War Films.

#### **AUTHORS’ CONTRIBUTIONS**

This paper is independently completed by Meng Yang.

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