

# Chinese Characteristics and Hybrid Fusion

## The Type Characteristic and Aesthetic Pursuit of Chinese Movies in the New Century

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**Abstract**—Genre movie originated in Hollywood and it is the product of movie commercialization and the aesthetic needs of the general public. Since the beginning of the new century, the typification of Chinese movie has become more and more obvious. With the deepening of globalization, face the foreign competition and the immature movie market, face public's aesthetic desires, Chinese movie which shoulder the burden of shaping the national soft power must get survival and development during the inevitably compromise and detour, find the breakthrough of Chinese typed movie in various hybrid fusion of all kinds of types.

**Keywords**—genre movie; Chinese movie; commercial logic; popular aesthetic; hybrid fusion; Chinese characteristics

### I. INTRODUCTION

"Genre" as a word, its meaning can be understood as a kind of constraint, a formula. Dividing art by category is an emphasis on the ideal paradigm of artistic expression, control artistic style and content to make it standardized and easy to imitate and refine. In the eyes of producers, movie as a cultural product, its commodity attributes is at the first place, it must meet the entertainment needs of the audience in order to achieve profitability. The Genre movie happened to be "a set of movies which have obvious similarities in thematic idea, story line, character type, movie scene and movie skills." [1] Classify the movies, make formula processing to movie theme, story line, character design, scene scheduling, production skills and others to form a relatively fixed movie model and type, which could minimize the production costs and reduce market risk, but also could face the mass market, to develop and meet the entertainment desire of most of the audience, through the appropriate repetition of the story structure, the audience will gradually to guess the story line with a certain standard and paradigm, and then form a predictable viewing expectation. It can be said that genre movie is the hybrid fusion product of movie industrialization, movie art and the aesthetic taste of audience; the maturity of genre movie is a sign of a developed movie industry, also is the trend of popular cultural needs.

The classic genre movies represented by Hollywood are mainly romance movie, drama movie (movies that win by the story), gangster action movie, magic science fiction movie, comedy movie, war movie, western movie, disaster movie, horror suspense movie, historical biography, musical

movie, animation and more. With the change of times and the richness of movie contents, the development of genre movie has also gradually become more and more integrated. One movie often has the characteristics of many genre movies. Guard moderation and constant innovation in order to maintain the vitality of genre movie, "repeat" and "change" are the two principles genre movie needs to uphold in the development process.

The development of genre movie has a great relationship with the social background, cultural tradition and aesthetic paradigm it relies on, and it could even be described as the collective unconscious audio-visual performance of a nationality community. Historical experience proves that the creation and production of genre movies in various countries cannot copy the existing Hollywood modes in an all-round way, but they should be "customized" according to their own cultural history, popular aesthetic and spending habits. As for the Chinese movie market, with the advent of the new century, many domestic movie practitioners are gradually realizing the importance of genre-oriented moviemaking and starting to promote the movie industrialization. In December 2002, the "Heroes" directed by Zhang Yimou was released, this work which followed the commercialization mode and pursuit popular aesthetic appreciation made Chinese movies to appear in the world movie circle with the successful genre movie image. The first element for its success is the All-Star participation, second is the director used a large number of Chinese aesthetics elements: Flash and shadow of sword, poetry and painting, beautiful mountains and rivers and a large area of rich tones show a miraculous oriental aesthetic mood. "Heroes" is a milestone in the creation of domestic genre movie. It enables more moviemakers to realize that movie as cultural industries, must be based on genre pursuit in order to achieve good development.

### II. THE CURRENT PURSUIT OF CHINESE MOVIE GENRE — INHERITANCE AND IMPROVEMENT, HYBRID FUSION

Chinese genre movie creation started late, the concept is not yet mature, but it contains rich resources with a great development potential. The road of Chinese genre movie must root in the genes of Chinese civilization, and express unique Chinese culture and spiritual temperament. In addition, Chinese movie as a cultural product, has the important task of shaping the country's soft power so it must

be guided by the mainstream value system in a clear-cut manner. The creation of Chinese genre movie on one hand it should follow the paradigm of genre movie, on the one hand it should break the limitation of traditional movie genres, under the premise of convey the socialist core value to meet the aesthetic taste of the general public, make hybrid fusion of movie types, in order to create a inclusive, innovative and generative movie aesthetic discourse system.

Chinese swordsman movie is unique all over the world. The spirit of "Chivalry" and "Martial Arts" are already a globally recognized Chinese spiritual factor. The suspense thriller movie has also been modified in the genre of Chinese movies, such as the spy movie is the Chinese variant of Hollywood suspense movie, "The message" released in 2009 is a typical representative of such movies; In recent years, the romance movie is also exploring new ways of combining western and Chinese: add the magic elements, so that romance movie has a broader expression space, "Painted skin" and "Mural" use the creation mode of Western approach + oriental values; "chick movie" rise in the 90s of last century in Hollywood applied a new way of narrative for domestic love movies, domestic "chick" movie casts its perspective on Chinese women's daily life and thoughts in the period of social transition, combined with urban fashion elements to highlight the self-reliance, independence and self-improvement of Chinese women in the new clearly. Representatives include "Love is not blind", "Seeking Mr. Right", "Soulmate" and so on; it is worth mentioning that, Mahua Fun Agecompanyput domestic original drama "Goodbye Mr. Loser", "Mr. Donkey" and "Never say die" on the big screen successfully, this way turned living theater into movies also opened up a new path of domestic genre movie. This shows that Chinese story, Chinese expression of Chinese value is an important support for Chinese genre movie, all kinds of movies are relatively easy to be improved on this basis and develop into a genre movie with Chinese characteristics.

### III. CHINESE STYLE GENRE MOVIE — THEME MOVIE, HOLIDAY MOVIE, SWORDSMAN ACTION MOVIE

Since the beginning of the new century, the development of Chinese movie has gradually formed its own unique style and pursuit. It has owned a number of new types of movies with Chinese characteristics and various types blending. Among them, the Theme movie, Holiday movie, swordsman action movie became the "Chinese style genre movie" with the most Chinese cultural characteristics.

#### A. Theme Movie

As one of the representatives of domestic movies, the Theme movie is closely related to China's political system and cultural industry requirements; it is the infiltration of ideology into the field of culture and arts. Since the beginning of the new century, when moviemakers facing Theme movies, they have started to consciously apply market-oriented operation mode, added commercial movie creation method into stories, characters and visual styles and trying to mix and match various genre elements which could promote market efficiency. For example, the movie "The

Knot" carries not only a certain theme preaching function but also focus on artistic and ornamental features. The narrative adopts a combination of actual and visual conditions together, and put the character's destiny in the changing times. As an artistic theme movie, "The knot" meets the public's aesthetic needs and is a useful attempt to mix movie types. Another example is the series of theme movies from 2009 to now, "The Founding of a Republic", "Beginning of the Great Revival", "The Founding of An Army", they used lots of stars starred to promote business success, and also is the new approach to preach the new mainstream ideology.

Among the Theme movies in recent years, successful examples include Feng Xiaogang's "Assembly" and Wu Jing's new movie "Wolf Warriors II" in 2017. The two movies are very different in style, but they all are the models that make perfect combination of theme ideology and commercial elements. They both through the exciting storyline, magnificent and shocking war scenes, delicate emotions and rich audiovisual aesthetics rendering to convey mainstream values quietly and peacefully, so that to achieve the effective expression of Chinese connotation and Chinese spirit.

From the success of these movies, we can see that the type of movie is not rigid. It requires many type elements appeared in one movie at the same time according to the demand, so that the ideological, artistic, commercial and other comprehensive factors could work together. For the Theme movies, it could get to the way to break through only with the creation practices and commercial mechanisms of genre movies and pay attention to the market performance and the audiences' needs.

#### B. Holiday Movie

Holiday movie can be said to be a major feature of the pursuit of Chinese movie genre, it is a movie created specifically for a certain holiday or released at certain holiday or a certain period of time, the content of the story is often associated with the corresponding holiday. Such as the above mentioned "Founding of a Republic" is to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of People's Republic of China, "Beginning of the Great Revival" is to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party, and "The Founding of An Army" is to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the founding of People's Liberation Army, these movies are the typical representatives of such movie genre. In the core of political propaganda, the entertainment, appreciation and the topicality of the movie is highlighted. In recent years, the movies created specially for Valentine's Day have become a landscape in cinema: on Valentine's Day of 2013, the movie "Together" and "101st Marriage Proposal" released together; on Valentine's Day of 2014, "Beijing Love Story" and other 6 love movies released together; The poster of the movie "Somewhere only we know" directed by Xu Jinglei wrote the slogan "See you at 2015 Valentine's Day", and released on the 2015 Valentine's Day as promised ...

The most powerful representative of Holiday movie this new movie genre is New Year's movie. Since the movie "Rumble in the Bronx" directed by Jackie Chan released in mainland China with the name of New Year's movies in 1995, domestic directors were quickly inspired. Since then, "New Year movie" has become a new pursuit of Chinese movie genre and has opened up a new path for domestic movie industry. New Year movie refers to the movies released during New Year or Spring Festival, mostly are comic stories and action movies, so they have a distinctive public color. Feng Xiaogang, the leader of the New Year's movie since the beginning of the new century, his movies generally adopt the warm narration of "grounded atmosphere", with a comic language style, fashion visual pursuit and the closed-loop structure of the Big Reunion end, blended slightly absurd gamification in postmodern context. In genre pursuit, Feng's New Year movies tend to combined romantic and comedy together; in narrative and characterization, Feng Xiaogang broke the binary opposition mode of thinking, looking for the fuzzy zone of human nature, so that the small people could speak with contradictory psychological complex. "Movie is to pull out people's desires, and then find ways to solve them... while people venting their desires, the audience will have a pleasure." [2] As an encoder, Feng Xiaogang understand audience's mind very well, he seized the local cultural characteristics of their own homeland and gave the audience a fixed viewing expectations.

Under the enlightenment of Feng's New Year movies, many directors started the creation of New Year and holiday movies. Among them, Xu Zheng's "Lost on Journey", "Lost in Thailand" and "Lost in Hong Kong" and other "Lost" movie series, combined comedy, action, love, road trip and other elements. 2015 can be regarded as the "Hot Year" of New Year movie, "Monster Hunt", "Lost in Hong Kong", "A hero or not", "Goodbye Mr. Loser", "The Man from Macau 2" which sweeping the top 5 domestic movie box office all released during Lunar New Year, National holiday and summer holiday; "Surprise", "Detective Chinatown", "Mr. Six" and other more than ten movies are also successively released between Christmas to New Year's Day. These movies all reflected the hybridization and intercrossing in genre pursuit. They combined various types together such as science fiction, action, love, crime and comedy.

Genre movie is dependent on the repetition to achieve the desired viewing effect, New Year movie's audience precisely required the pre-set psychological aesthetics which brought by this sense of repetition. New Year movies are generally highlighted the three characteristics of genre movie, that is, formulaic plot, stereotyped figure, graphic visual image, the same routine (original image) with some slightly fresh story (partial adjustment and manifestation of the variation), so that the audience feel a familiar strange experience while watching, and then stimulate their resonance, which is also a collective unconscious wake up. The human spirit and values delivered by excellent New Year movies are universally applicable, and can be recognized by the audience in other countries. Therefore,

make efforts to create such movies is also the cultural tool to strengthen China's movie industry and create national image.

### C. Swordsman Action Movie

Swordsman action movie is the most typical type of movie with the most Chinese style, in addition to show the world the flash and shadow sword screen fantasy, the word "Xia" has become the unique Chinese characteristics, which cannot be copied by any foreign movie industry. It carries the profound cultural connotation and national spirit of China. "The source of swordsman culture, of course from the reality existence of Xia in Chinese history... it produced in the pre-Qin era, flourished in the Warring States, declined after Qin and Han Dynasty, but never ended." [3] Movie as an audio-visual art, can intuitively displayed the wonderful Kung Fu in legend, and enmity and resentment in Jiang Hu on the screen, and brought sensory enjoyment which beyond life experience and daily imagination to the audience. In 2001, the movie "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" directed by Li An won the 73rd Academy Award for Best Foreign Language movie and other four awards, marking Chinese swordsman movie has entered the world of movie forest with a mature gesture; It proved swordsman action movie is a universal cultural commodity which is able to occupy the international market. Since then, the domestic swordsman action movie ushered in a creative peak, Zhang Yimou has launched the "Hero", "House of Flying Daggers", "Curse of the Golden Flower", Xu Ke launched "The Legend of Zu", "The Seven Swords", Chen Kaige launched "The Promise", Ye Weixin launched "IpMan", Wang Jiawei launched "The Grandmaster" and Hou Xiaoxian's "The Assassin" which prestigious Cannes movie Festival, as well as the new generation director Lu Yang's "Brotherhood of Blades", Xu Haofeng's "The Master" ... These new swordsman action movies have greatly promoted the development of Chinese movie industry and demonstrated their special aesthetic features.

The beauty of martial arts in the new swordsman movies is not limited to the artistic movements of the body. Instead, it aims to elevate the spirit to the righteousness of and the awakening of man through the beauty of martial arts, which has more profound and transcendental values. From the angle of narration, it also breaks the dual opposites of black and white, good and bad in traditional swordsman movies, highlights the connotation of "Tao" of Chinese traditional culture and greatly eliminates the bloody and violent visual impressions in past swordsman movies. Such as "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon", "Hero", "The Master" are all conveying the concept of "Tao" and "Xia", which weakens the sensory stimulation of fist to flesh and splashes of blood, but soft and peacefully expressed the aesthetics in the spirit of martial arts with the artistic conception of oriental poetics. Among them, "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" has been regarded as a classic of martial arts aesthetics, unspeakable poetic beyond the limitations of time and space, make people to appreciate the beauty of Zen Buddhism which is empty heart crystal clear like mirror, with no emotion.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

"Chinese genre movie" grew up in the soil of traditional Chinese culture and ideology. It is an inevitable product of the prosperity of cultural industry and a spiritual food that meets the growing cultural needs of the general public. Since the beginning of the new century, with the transformation of social culture and the commercial logic of the market, as well as the changes of audiences' aesthetic preferences, the tendency of genre-oriented integration of Chinese movie has become more and more obvious. A new stereoscopic and more complex audiovisual discourse system has emerged.

The problem that cannot be ignored is that despite the gratifying output of Chinese genre movies in recent years, the quality is uneven and the trend of star effects is too clear. The structure of "star-studded + luxury audiovisual + mentally retarded narration" often becomes the box office guarantee. This immature genre movie created audiences who are too lazy to think, not only formed the unhealthy operation in movie market, for long term it would even lead to the cultural decay of entire nation. Perhaps this is the inevitable road for Chinese genre movie to the maturity. When the bustle dissipates and the box office bubble vanished, Chinese genre movies are bound to return to the movie itself, telling Chinese stories with thought-provoking narrative language and aesthetic concepts.

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