

“Home Coming”: Aesthetic Innovation of New Mainstream Films

Cao Rui^{1,a}, Chen Longshuai^{1,b}

¹*Literature and Media Department, Taishan University, Tai'an, China*
^a408158112@qq.com, ^b1811539818@qq.com

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Abstract: The movie "Home Coming" is based on the real evacuation of overseas Chinese and tells the story of Chinese diplomats who went through many dangers in a war-torn foreign country to evacuate their overseas Chinese and return home. The film creates characters through realism and de-heroism, enriches the emotional expression of new mainstream movies, breaks the fixed hero image in previous new mainstream movies, and creates a three-dimensional and full character image. It is an innovation and pioneering effort to tell Chinese stories well and convey the voice of China to the outside world. It has achieved the aesthetic innovation effect of new mainstream movies and has made new progress.

The movie "Home Coming" is based on the real evacuation of overseas Chinese and tells the story of Chinese diplomats who went through many dangers to evacuate their overseas Chinese and return home in a war-torn foreign country. The film connects the grand story background with the construction of ordinary individual diplomats. The plot is meticulous, the logic is strict, and the characters are vividly depicted. It cleverly avoids the limitations of narrow theme expression, single emotional expression, and over-exaggeration of personal heroism as the main theme of the film, making it become a milestone in the exploration of the integration and development of new mainstream films in aesthetics and popular culture.

New mainstream movies are defined as "the commercialization of theme movies, the mainstreaming of commercial movies, and the mainstreaming of art movies." [1] In the context of today's globalization, China's mainstream culture urgently needs to form a complete international communication system. There is an urgent need for innovation in domestic cultural communication forms and the impact of foreign cultures. While broadening the art of film expression, how can the social core value system and aesthetic value contained in films be accepted by society and audiences to the greatest extent through artistic creation? Absorption still requires in-depth exploration. The movie "Home Coming" innovates in narrative form, characterization, and emotional expression, achieving the aesthetic innovation effect of a new mainstream movie.

1. Narrative method: spectacle and narrative innovation

In recent years, domestic new mainstream movies have begun to learn from the heavy industrial production model and high-tech special effects methods of American Hollywood movies, making

most movies with the main theme more inclined to present spectacles. Spectacle film expressions can certainly bring strong visual shock and impact to the audience, but if only spectacle narratives are used, promoting the development of the plot often makes the plot of the movie monotonous and unable to resonate with the audience emotionally. Therefore, in "Home Coming", while using high-tech means to pursue visual pleasure, the director also began to pay attention to the integrity and logic of the narrative.

In terms of constructing spectacle, "Home Coming" uses high-tech means to create realistic and exciting war scenes, giving the audience an extremely shocking visual impact: the yellow sand in the sky, demonstrations against the president, gunshots, and explosions. The deafening roar turned the house into ruins, with broken limbs scattered all over the ground, flesh and blood mixed with scorched earth, and dust and gunpowder smoke covering the entire street. The majestic scenes and the use of special effects lenses created a shocking audio-visual effect. While using spectacle means to shape the film and television style, the director also showed his emphasis on narrative: in the film's narrative, "going home" is used as the theme, and multiple emotional elements such as diplomacy, friendship, and family are integrated to enrich the film's narrative. At the same time, it enriches the narrative clues. In terms of the overall narrative structure, the film reduces the modular story structure and describes multiple small events in detail, showing richer character psychology and inner emotions through multiple details. The film focuses on various events during the evacuation process. It seems that there is no major reversal, but in fact, the connection and development of each plot is told very completely, and the plots of the story are interconnected, driving the audience's emotions to constantly change. The improvement and breakthrough in the film's narrative is not only a breakthrough in the narrative framework of "family and country isomorphism", but also integrates humanistic sentiments and traditional Chinese culture into the narrative to express a "human destiny". The concept of "community" not only makes the basic narrative framework of the film very solid, but also allows the emotions revealed in the film to move to a higher level, thus ensuring that the film can achieve a breakthrough in narrative as a new mainstream film.

The characters of Zong Dawei and Cheng Lang in the movie have a prominent contrasting effect. There are also many conflicts in the narrative process, but they are finally sublimated. The character arcs are highlighted in the conflicts and confrontations, and the narrative structure becomes more complete and tight. The film also puts a lot of energy into depicting scenes in which diplomats use courage and wisdom to turn danger into safety and break through dangerous situations through negotiation and communication. For example, in the Russian roulette game that appears many times in the film, in one of which Wadil lost his life, the audience's emotions followed the characters in the film in anger and fear, and the plot narrative of the entire film also reached a point: Everyone is really facing the threat of death, and has changed from the previous disunity to being firmly united. When he played Russian roulette with the rebels for the second time, as the trigger was pulled again and again, Zong Dawei's reaction became more and more intense, from being nervous and trembling at the beginning to being physically uncontrollable. Vomiting caused by fear, at the same time, Cheng Lang also picked up the camera to bravely record and stop the atrocities of the rebel leader. This is the transformation of the two people's characters, the growth of the characters, and the perfect display of the character's arc. It promotes the development of the storyline and the development of the character's personality while narrating. On the one hand, this reduces the proportion of exciting and fast-paced audio-visual content in the narrative, and more deeply depicts the character's personality and actions. It not only enriches the character's personality and creates a three-dimensional character image, but also promotes the development of the plot. On the other hand, such a narrative method effectively enhances the drama degree of the film. The film is more in line with the simple aesthetic style of realism. In the process of watching the film, the audience can

immerse themselves in the scene of the film and have emotional resonance with the characters in the film. It is easier for audiences to understand the emotions expressed in the film and to form an excellent viewing experience.

2. Characterization: Realism and De-heroism

In the process of portraying the artistic image, it is necessary to be faithful to the true appearance of life, develop according to the most authentic logic in real life, and use realistic means to embody the typification of the artistic image. This is in line with Engels's basic stipulations of realism's "reality of details" and "typical characters in typical environments." "Home Coming" creates a typical image of a diplomat in a typical diplomatic event, depicts the characters in the evacuation event in depth and detail from multiple aspects, and strives to use the most real events and personal experiences of the characters to present a realistic aesthetic style. As the film director Rao Xiaozhi said: "What makes me feel me moved the most were the real diplomats who evacuated overseas Chinese. They are ordinary people in life, fathers, husbands and sons, but their duties require them to be on the front line." Therefore, when portraying characters, the director focuses more on expressing the "authenticity" of the character, shaping the character into a rich and complex round character.

"The theme cannot be clarified through reasoning, nor can it be embodied contrary to the specificity of history. It can only infect people through characters and class passions reflected in conflicts" [2]. The portrayal of the protagonist Zong Dawei in the film changes the traditional purely positive portrayal of heroes who are brave, fearless, and invincible, and makes Zong Dawei human and real. He can lie, evade, and be afraid; he is cold, tactful, cowardly, and cowardly. He is a husband who is suffering from the war in a foreign country and his wife is about to give birth. He is also a diplomat who wants to lead the expatriates back to the motherland safely. He engages in a revolver bet with the rebels. At the moment when he pulls the trigger, he will be afraid, timid and trembling uncontrollably when faced with life and death. Faced with repeated rejections by border prosecutor Hassan, he was able to suppress the anger in his heart and greet him with a smile. Different from the portrayal of protagonists in other new mainstream movies, Zong Dawei has many "flaws" in his personal character. He has many flaws and weaknesses that ordinary people have. He is not heroic or perfect. This actually breaks the stereotyped hero image in traditional new mainstream movies. When the "savior" of a group of people is no longer a fearless and invincible "hero", but becomes an ordinary person who once wanted to escape and retreat, has a cowardly character, and is sleek and sophisticated. Of course, this ordinary person also has something unusual. That is, he also has the status of a diplomat. It is the combination of this setting that is in line with the personality of ordinary people and his responsibilities as a diplomat that makes Zong Dawei's character more three-dimensional and complete, and can arouse a strong sense of identification from the audience.

In "Aspects of the Novel", Forster proposed the two concepts of "flat characters" and "round characters", finding an answer to the long-standing problem of classifying characters in novels, and this theory is also applicable to other categories besides novels literary works[3]. Similarly, Cheng Lang, as a young diplomatic attaché has sufficient courage and dedication, but his reckless, extreme, and stubborn character is also very different from traditional heroes. The characters of Zong Dawei and Cheng Lang are full and three-dimensional. Although they can be timid and fearful, impulsive and stubborn, let alone perfect, it is the ordinary and insignificant character settings that further demonstrate their firm sense of mission and show it creates a perfect character arc, and at the same time, it can better express the character's inner entanglement, pain, and human struggle. Through detailed descriptions and characterizations, the activities and development of one or more

individuals are shown, and the spirit displayed is integrated with the mainstream thoughts of society. The good or bad qualities displayed by these individuals are actually popular. Through Refining, summarizing, and highlighting these popular qualities make the characters in the film round and able to express certain emotions. This is the benefit of the de-heroic description method, and it is also the film's innovation in portraying ordinary heroic characters.

3. Emotional expression: Returning home after thousands of miles and a community with a shared future for mankind

The current new mainstream movies are often accustomed to pinning one or more emotions on a certain individual or group. This emotion is often deeply imprinted in the genes of the Chinese nation, so once this emotion is shown or expressed as a theme, can usually arouse strong emotional identification from the audience. The fairy tale "The Voyage of Sinbad" is mentioned many times in the film. In the story, Sinbad made seven adventurous voyages, experienced hardships and hardships, and finally returned home safely every time. This corresponds to the diplomats who travelled across the ocean to help expatriates return to their homeland in foreign countries. It also reflects the first level of emotional expression in "Home Coming" - returning home. This is the Chinese people's attachment to their homeland in Chinese culture and longing, whether it is Zong Dawei's concern and longing for his wife in the film, or Lu Yisong's promise to take everyone home. Going home is also returning to the country, and it is a "feeling of home and country" shared by new mainstream movies. While showing the strength of the country, it also demonstrates the unyielding, united, and friendly spirit of the Chinese people.

"Home Coming" also embodies the heroic complex usually found in new mainstream movies, but this heroic complex has strong practical significance in expression, and is different from the single patriotism or the expression of individual and collective heroism in other new mainstream films. During the evacuation process, Zong Dawei and Cheng Lang never abandoned Wadir, a non-Chinese national. Under the threat of the rebels and when their own lives were threatened, they resolutely rescued many people who wanted to return to China with the Chinese Donu people. This reflects that the Chinese people do not recognize that there are differences in national and ethnic identities in the world. When they are in danger and are in trouble, the Chinese people can not only save themselves, but also put the people of other countries and nations on an equal footing and work with the world. People get out of danger together. This is what distinguishes "Home Coming" from other new mainstream movies in terms of spirituality and emotion. How to innovate the narrative method of Chinese stories and how to make stories that carry Chinese culture, Chinese concepts, and Chinese values accepted? On the one hand, we must meet our own emotional needs, and on the other hand, we must arouse the emotional resonance and psychological identification of the audience. This is not there is no longer a single patriotism and national pride of "anyone who offends China will be punished no matter how far away" or "promoting the prestige of our country". Instead, on the basis of these spiritual connotations, the concept of "a community with a shared future for mankind" is added. This kind of spiritual expression is innovation and pioneering effort to tell Chinese stories and convey Chinese voice to the outside world, and is an important channel for spreading Chinese culture. One detail in the film is worth noting. When Zong Dawei led the expatriates back to the motherland, the sudden explosion of fireworks in the sky made Zong Dawei subconsciously dodge and fear. At this time, the war and artillery fire abroad was still affecting Zong Dawei. What is different from foreign countries is that the sound of gunfire is the same. One is the guns that make people displaced or even lose their lives, and the other is the fireworks in the prosperous times. The two form a sharp contrast. Through the contrast, the audience can deeply feel the turmoil abroad. This detail is an innovative way to tell Chinese stories and spread Chinese

culture.

New mainstream films are a relatively important type of Chinese films and play a guiding role in domestic films to a certain extent. As a new mainstream film with certain aesthetic innovations, "Home Coming" is worthy of summary and reflection in many aspects. Under the grand narrative structure of evacuation, "Home Coming" focuses on Chinese diplomats who traveled through the war and led their compatriots home despite hardships and dangers. It has changed the narrative perspective of previous new mainstream movies. It is no longer like the previous movies such as "Wolf Warriors II" and "Operation Red Sea". The overall narrative is from a macro perspective and has grand artistic expression. It is more expressive. It attracts the audience and is more likely to arouse the audience's sense of national pride. At the same time, the story seems relatively bland, lacking a gripping climax, or the empathy of the climax is not very obvious. The hardships and crises shown in "Home Coming" during the evacuation process seem to be insufficient compared to "Wolf Warriors II" or "Operation Red Sea", and the crisis is not resolved through fierce struggle. This is different from the previous renderings. The tense atmosphere cannot be matched and cannot arouse strong psychological changes and emotional resonance in the audience. But unlike "Wolf Warriors II" and "Operation Red Sea", "Home Coming" focuses more on the integrity and innovation of the narrative structure, connecting the grand story background through more small things to ensure the overall narrative of the story. The context makes the story plot rich and the structure closely connected. The film uses realism and de-heroism to create characters, enriching the emotional expression of new mainstream films. It depicts the characters in the evacuation incident in depth and detail from many aspects, pays attention to the emotions and living conditions of ordinary people, and breaks the previous new mainstream film. The hero image is fixed in mainstream movies, and the arc of the character is highlighted in the conflict and confrontation, creating a three-dimensional and full character image. In terms of value expression, it is combined with the traditional Chinese value system to create a very full emotion of "going home". At the same time, it is combined with the global concept of "a community with a shared future for mankind" to further enhance the artistic value and ornamental value of the main theme film, and also to The social core value system and aesthetic value contained in the film are maximally accepted by society and the audience through artistic creation.

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