

# The significance of the change from "movie" to "movie view" to the evolution of Chinese films

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**Abstract:** "Movie" is an appellation of early Chinese films. "Shadow" uses light as a pen to write a summary of screen behavior; "Drama" is an abstract meaning of plot and dramatic conflict. "Film drama" reflects the creative idea and direction of early Chinese films, and also reflects the origin between it and drama. In the history of Chinese film, this unique concept of national film was formed through multiple washes of subjective choice and the promotion of historical opportunities, and has gradually become the dominant concept of art and film in the development of Chinese film.

**Keywords:** Movie and theater view; Chinese movie; National Film Concept

## 1. Introduction

When the film first came to China, people called it shadow play and thought it was very similar to the Chinese shadow play. Chinese opera has a history of more than one thousand years in China, and the Chinese people have enjoyed watching it since ancient times. In drama (traditional Chinese opera), the structure of the story is very delicate, and the climax is often the opposition of good and evil, and most of the time the ending is the triumph of evil over good, and the plot tries to be exciting, smooth and coherent. The most important thing is that drama has a kind of enlightenment purpose and function in the cultural edification of Chinese Confucianism for thousands of years. It uses twists and turns of the story to make the audience be attracted and moved while being subtly influenced and guided.

At the beginning of the introduction of the film into China, it was called "film drama", which is a very apt and vivid title. It not only reflects that it is an imported product, but also shows the infiltration and influence of Chinese traditional culture in the aesthetic process of Chinese people's acceptance of this imported product. There is only one word difference between "film" and "film", but it vividly reflects the unique aesthetic concept of Chinese film, that is, Chinese people are always accustomed to talk about and think about film from the perspective of drama, and follow the concept of drama. The first film made in China, Dingjun Mountain, was a part of Peking Opera. In the eyes of the Chinese people at that time, film was a way to reproduce the drama. Theater was the main form of entertainment for the people, and film became a form of providing this.

## 2. Dingjun Mountain: the foundation of the film tradition

Fengtai Photo Studio is famous in Beijing for taking pictures of famous Peking Opera actors. In 1905, Ren bought a French-made wood-shell hand-mounted camera and 14 rolls of film from Qi Raifu, and invited Tan Xinpei, the most famous Peking Opera actor of that time, to shoot "Dingjunshan". It was the first film made in China, and also the first opera film. It recorded several parts of the Peking Opera of the same name. Since only silent films could be made at that time, the singing and reading scenes in the original play had to be deleted, and only the scenes with many martial arts and dance movements or expressive expressions, such as "Zhanying", "dancing sword" and "Confrontation", were filmed. Later, when Dingjun Mountain was shown in Daguanlou Film Theater (one of the earliest film screening venues in China), it was warmly welcomed by the audience, and there was a "huge crowd to watch it".

The commercial characteristics of movies have long determined that movies must be targeted at the public. In Beijing, from the Qing Palace to the people in the streets, all expressed their sincere

love for opera with practical actions. Weddings, funerals, opening ceremonies, as long as the opera stage is set up, people inside and outside are praised. Using film to record Peking Opera performances can meet the needs of both refined and popular tastes. When Ren Jingfeng made "Dingjunshan", it was obvious from his shrewd businessman's mind that he had a clear understanding of the level of Chinese people's understanding and acceptance, which is why he dared to shoot a film that combined "drama" with "art". The target audiences of the film range from ticket buyers and opera fans to ordinary people who love this art of light and shadow. This means that the content of the film medium must follow the composition of the mainstream audience in order to maximize the market. What is valuable is what is truly Chinese and what Chinese audiences want to see. This actually represents the origin of the entertainment and commercialization of Chinese films. Movies not only bring a new way of entertainment to Chinese audiences, but also update the way of Chinese audiences' perception and understanding of the world. It quietly penetrates a new attitude towards the world into the Chinese audience.

From the first film made in China, "Dingjun Mountain", to the following films, "Spring Incense" and "Tian Nu Scattered Flowers", etc., the first series of films that China tried to make were based on opera. The early title of the film, the screening place and the content of the three aspects reflect that Chinese film has a natural blood relationship with Chinese traditional culture since its birth. Mr. LAN Fan believes that in order to further understand the word "film drama", it should be regarded as a positive phrase, "film drama" as a positive phrase, the emphasis is on 'drama', 'film' is just the modifier of 'drama'. "That is to say, film is a new art form for the audience at that time, just a dramatic style of presentation, 'drama' is the core, originated from the traditional opera, and 'shadow' is the film as a technical level of performance characteristics different from the traditional opera. In the 1930s, after the rise of the left-wing film movement in China, 'film' was replaced by the word 'film'. Therefore, the word 'film' has Chinese characteristics. In the early stage, the shooting, screening and reception of Chinese films were deeply influenced by the concept of drama, and they were closely related for a long time. As a cultural import, Chinese films can quickly take root and integrate into the local content as soon as they are accepted. In this respect, it should be said that this is a bright symbol of the success and smooth development of early films.

### **3. "film view" nourished China's early national film industry**

Shichuan zhang zhengqiu as a pioneer of early Chinese film industry, is the first Chinese film narrative taken both commercial entertaining film, this time most of the Chinese film has the function of social education, based on the principle of dramatic conflict, emphasizing the coincidence factor of narrative structure, the ups and downs, often end in good victory over evil to knot, He believed that "the film script is the soul of the film". Therefore, since the birth of "film play", early film workers were inseparable from the exploration of film play.

#### **3.1 Highlight the theme of social education**

With Zhang Zheng two artificial concept works on the theme of The Times of extremely emphasized the education function of the film, highlight the theme of encouraging people, have the function of social education, adhering to the "good agent of exposition of intelligence", "improved society", "civilized life" and other slogans, reflects a highly ideological content and artistic achievement, combing the correct value orientation, To realize the coordination and unity of entertainment and culture. For example, the film "Sisters" reflects the social situation of China in the 1930s with the different fates and experiences of the twin sisters, Dabao and Dabao. The film has a tendency of social criticism, which exposes and criticizes the social injustice.

#### **3.2 Draw nourishment from the dramatic art**

In terms of narrative, Zhang Zheng 2 people mostly based on the works of drama in the era of concept model, draw nutrition from drama, taking three episodic structure in the structure, pay

attention to the narrative and structure on the handing down and skills, good at arranging the film plot, pay attention to the dramatic film build, make the film narrative structure, the ups and downs, highlighting the plot of bizarre, They also tend to be three-dimensional in character creation.

For example, Yu Weiru, the hero of the film "Orphan Saves Ancestor", lost his husband when he was young, was falsely accused and expelled, and finally lost his father. Layers of misfortune and the final vainment formed dramatic tension, which fully demonstrated the charm of traditional Chinese narrative mode. According to the traditional Chinese marriage ceremony, "Difficult Husband, Difficult Wife" describes how the Gan and Kun families, who each have one child, send an unknown couple to the wedding chamber with the help of a matchmaker. As the first short feature film in the history of Chinese film, it is also the first work of family ethics film.

#### **4. The Boundary between drama and film: "Drama is bigger than heaven"**

Undoubtedly, the concept of drama plays an important role in the early film theory. As an early film worker, Zheng Zhengqiu introduced the films originally belonging to the western language into China, and made every effort to localize and create a family ethics drama model suitable for Chinese watching. As the advocate and proposer of the film theory, Zheng fully expounded that film is a new variety of silent play and drama. He pointed out that "all the original quality of the drama, the tone out of the film is not a problem" this sentence also shows that he believes that the film is in essence a kind of drama.

However, as a dominant creative phenomenon, "film" gradually died out after the rise of the left-wing film movement in the early and mid-thirties. Just as Zhong Dafeng said, with the rise of the left-wing film movement, the concept of montage had a huge impact on the film theory, and the montage theory gradually replaced the film theory. In addition to montage theory, "film view" was also impacted by the introduction of the long-shot documentary theory in the late 1970s and early 1980s and the creation practice represented by the academy.

In this context, in the mid-1980s, Zhong Dafeng, Chen Hornhe and some other young scholars of film research formally put forward the "film view" to study the early Chinese film concept of taking drama as the foundation and film as the end. Looking for new film language and realizing the modernization of film language have become the focus of debate in "film view". Chinese film theory is launched on the drama of the "lost cane" (Bai Jingsheng), "divorce dramas and movies" (clock call Fei), "let the film from the stage box free" (Lu Jianhua), "the film performance means complete literature" (Zhang Junxiang), "literary value of the movie" questions "(gilles) and a series of around film and theater, film and literature Theory, and these problems have been converted to a movie or movie script should have a "dramatic" and "literariness" problem, and should be involved in the film cinematic or what is "the movie" the ontological problem of films. Drawing a clear line between film and drama and literature, and removing the "marriage relationship" and dependency relationship between film and drama and literature, became unprecedentedly important and urgent for filmmakers in the 1980s. However, these still did not make Chinese films get rid of the "drama is bigger than the sky" view of film. There are two reasons:

##### **4.1 Film is popular art and serves the public**

In essence, film is different from the pure film in the French avant-garde film. Avant-garde film pursues a kind of art that is completely broken with business by the minority elite. Influenced by various western modernization theories, it is separated from the public attribute and believes that "film does not need other arts as the intermediary and bridge". Chinese films, on the other hand, have always balanced the balance between the "high spring snow" and the "lower Riba", so that films still belong to the public.

For example, the themes of early Chinese films were mostly taken from folk stories, jokes and novels. For example, Dingjunshan was taken from the 70th and 71st chapters of Romance of The

Three Kingdoms. The Burning of the Red Lotus Temple is also adapted from a wuxia novel, which shows that Chinese movies are attached to drama from the very beginning.

## **4.2 "Shadow" and "drama" complement each other**

Although "shadow play" is a development phenomenon of early Chinese film, it does not copy the drama and use film means to achieve dramatic content. It is a combination of film and drama. Compared with the western view of film, Chinese view takes film as the foundation and drama as the law, while western view takes film as the foundation and drama as the form. China is willing to explore the dramatic and combative nature of movies and convey strong ideology through movies, while the West is obsessed with long shots and montage. Western such as the leading film movement, expressionism genre, long and documentary aesthetics, essentially are discussing how to express, films and China from concept to the left to seventeen years, dedicated to film what expression, which is through the form of a dramatic "figures spoke, shows how voice, the character's voice to achieve what purpose".

"Shadow" and "play" are always the two contradictory aspects of the film, they not only struggle with each other, but also depend on each other. The connotation and essence of film is to tell a good story, and a good story -- "drama" needs to be presented by "shadow". For example, one of the reasons for the popularity of the Fire of the Red Lotus Temple, an early Chinese wuxia and supernatural film, was that the special effects photography was full of innovation at the time. The sword fighting on the screen captivated the audience, and the same tight dramatic plot was also fascinating.

## **5. Take Farewell My Concubine as an example: The influence of film concepts on modern films**

### **5.1 Drama elements in Farewell My Concubine**

The movie "Farewell My Concubine" tells the story of two famous actors in The Times, which is naturally inseparable from the opera. "Chen skillfully uses dramatic elements to form the layered structure of the film, taking Peking Opera as the object of expression. He places the story in a grand historical change to tell the fate of the nation and the past of its characters." At the beginning of the self-study play, the two male protagonists bind their fates together, which can be said to be mutually beneficial and mutually damaging. But because of the different characters, the two men in different periods of the fate of the choice is also different. It is also because of Beijing Opera, so that the two characters have a greater artistic expression, whether it is the plot of the film development, or the character's own character, in the combination of drama and film can be shown incisively and vividly.

#### **5.1.1 The combination of film and drama, rendering works thick cultural sense**

From jinghu play, the movie to end, are mixed with strong element of drama, film mainly involves the Peking Opera and kunqu opera, select the classic Beijing Opera and kunqu opera, such as Beijing Opera "farewell my concubine", "the drunken beauty", the kunqu opera "peony pavilion", "night rush", "think of worldly pleasures", etc., the content is the essence part of the Chinese traditional culture, These contents are the essence of Chinese traditional culture, which increases the cultural deposits and Chinese characteristics of the film, and combines the excellent art form of Chinese opera with the film. The two forms complement each other organically. With the help of the mass communication of the film, the purpose of the communication of the opera is also achieved.

### 5.1.2 Film matching, highlight the image of the characters, the performance of the character's personality

The interplay between film and opera makes the protagonist Cheng Dieyi have dual personalities and different life trajectories. After the incident of Sifan, Cheng has a sense of female gender identity, thinking that he is Yu Ji, and he lives in the movie Farewell My Concubine all his life. He admires the overlord, but in fact he is a man, which constitutes one of the dramatic conflicts. Cheng Dieyi's life is a rewritten life, because of the sinian Angle, the feminine beauty of Cheng Dieyi can still be seen from the demeanor and the foot. As Yu Ji was unfortunate, he was also unfortunate. "Cheng Dieyi's tragedy was caused by his historical background, special events and special status. The most important reason was that he was always obsessed with drama and overlord." The director uses the play and film to show the multiple and complex personalities of the characters. Siye Yuan fell in love with Dieyi because of the play, and he fell in love with Yu Ji. Duan Xiaolou believes that drama and life are completely separate, so when he has to choose between them, he naturally chooses life. And Juxian is also married to Duan Xiaolou because of his status as a performer. The love and hate of the whole film are all because of the play, because of the play and die.

### 5.1.3 Opera culture symbol to express the theme of the film

The characters in the drama are the symbols of the characters in the opera Farewell My Concubine. Cheng Dieyi is Yu Ji, and Yu Ji is Cheng Dieyi. As the film progresses, the tragic fate of Cheng Dieyi is similar to that of Yu Ji who commits suicide with her sword for love in the opera. And the image of the overlord is also in line with Duan Xiaolou's character. The fortitude and helplessness of the overlord are also vividly displayed in the plot. The cultural symbols of drama are the salient features of this film. The character symbols of drama are used to make the protagonist walk along two tracks of life. It is also true and false, one virtual and one real. Makes the movie plot scheduling more full of tension.

## 5.2 The Legend of the White Snake: A successful breakout of Cantonese opera films

One of the difficulties in the creation of opera films is to deal with the relationship between opera and film, which is not only balanced but also chosen. The Cantonese opera film "The Legend of the White Snake · Love" reinterprets the classic story and realizes the compatibility of ideological theme and artistic effect. Its artistic treatment can be summarized by the term "poetic art", that is, the ideal expression of theme by artistic means. The Cantonese opera film "Legend of the White Snake · Love" flexibly uses the traditional opera program and transforms it into a modern one. It presents the essence of the traditional opera art poetically, and combines it with special effects and 4K HD images, so that the audience can not only see the beauty of the traditional art, but also obtain an aesthetic experience different from the stage version.

### 5.2.1 The traditional opera formula is preserved to give full play to its artistic beauty.

The climax of the film is the water flooding the golden Hill. The White Snake fights the 18 Arhats with its long sleeves of water. Baguette and water sleeve fight against each other, the beauty of hardness and softness is perfectly presented, and then matched with appropriate music, the picture has a sense of tension, but also retains the fluency and softness of the martial arts scene. Under normal circumstances, opera actors on the stage can express the various emotions of the characters only with their movements and figures, but in the film lens, the expression and expression of the characters are very clear, which is undoubtedly a test for the opera actors.

### 5.2.2 Advanced technology enhances the audience's visual experience

The main creative team shot the first few drafts, and created more than 200 conceptual designs and more than a dozen scene Spaces. These advanced technologies bring a shocking visual experience to the audience, which makes up for the imagination of the White Snake story. In addition, the film also enriches the fighting scenes in the opera, showing the elegance of the

southern school of Cantonese opera. The Southern School of Cantonese Opera pays attention to picking, beating, leaping and killing. The film not only follows the traditional performance procedures, but also incorporates a large number of acrobatic movements, perfectly combining realistic martial arts performances with the artistic characteristics of freehand drama, and truly achieves the "moving without changing the shape".

## 6. Conclusion

The emphasis of "film drama" theory on the social education function of film shows strong Oriental color. As Chen Hornhe said, "Film aesthetics starts from the function of film, and combines this function with specific social and historical conditions to consider, becoming a film ontology with social function as the core." This kind of highlighting of social function shows the underlying color of Chinese traditional culture and philosophy from a deep level. On the one hand, Chinese traditional society is an ethics-based society, which relies heavily on family life and ethical education. On the other hand, Chinese traditional culture contains the deep-rooted spirit of practical rationality, which is embodied in the pursuit of practical spiritual orientation and behavior posture, rather than the construction of abstract speculative and logical philosophical system. These cultural characteristics have been obviously continued in the theory of "film and drama".

In addition to theatricality and enlightenment, the theory also emphasizes the accessibility of films. According to the theory, film is a popular and commercial art that is easy to understand. This means that the creation of the film should conform to the aesthetic taste and expectation of the public, and the social education function of the film should be embedded in the popular story in the form of "edutainment". At the beginning of its entry into China, film art was generally regarded as a novelty for citizens' entertainment, with a very strong folk positioning and entertainment color. In order to seek local development, Chinese early films formed a very close interactive relationship with popular literature and art such as drama art, popular novels and folklore.

The theory of "film play" can be said to have opened up the historical and theoretical vision of Chinese film studies. It tries to explore the kinship between Chinese film and national culture in the retrospection of history, reveal the stable and lasting artistic concept hidden under the surface of Chinese film history, and thus reveal the national character of film creation in the long history.

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