

An Analysis of Reception Aesthetics of China's "Co-productions"

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Abstract: The development of co-productions between Hong Kong and the mainland has always been accompanied by political, economic, cultural and other factors of traction, and has also brought different degrees of influence to the aesthetic presentation of co-productions. After CEPA, Hong Kong filmmakers began to "go north" with their mature film production experience and are ready to show their skills in the vast mainland market. Similarly, there are various aspects of the Hong Kong film industry chain. The policy was issued so that the co-production of the two places was formally incorporated into the national system.

Keywords: China's "Co-productions"; Reception aesthetics; The analysis

1. Introduction

The theory of "reception aesthetics" comes from the literary theory proposed by the German literary historian Jauss based on the readers and consumers. The "Expectation horizon" proposed in his theory is the "keystone" in the theoretical system of acceptance of aesthetics, and "is in the past aesthetic experience (the aesthetic experience of literary type, form, theme, style and language) and life. The potential directional expectation formed on the basis of experience (life experience of society, history, and life) is a prerequisite for the possibility of literary reading and acceptance, and it also restricts the realm of understanding."^[1] In addition, cultural factors, artistic accomplishments and personality psychology also affect the "expectation horizon". When the audience appreciates the film and television works, from the selection to the feeling, from the understanding to the identification, from the experience to the evaluation, they are inseparable from the subtle influence brought by the "expected horizon". When the recipient is appreciating a work of art, he can only get a sense of beauty from the work if the "expected horizon" is satisfied. The recipients of co-productions between the Mainland and Hong Kong include Hong Kong fans with "entertainment first" and Mainland audiences deeply influenced by "Confucian aesthetics". How to meet the "expected horizons" of movie fans under the different cultural backgrounds of the two places requires a combination of filmmakers. The consideration of various factors for film creation.

2. The Reception Aesthetics of Co-productions of Historical Costumes

Since 2002, "Hero" has set off an upsurge of watching ancient costume movies at home and abroad. The effect of the increased production of the big scenes has brought a strong visual impact to the audience and aroused the audience's keen interest in the theme of ancient costumes. In order to meet the expectations of the audience, filmmakers from the two places have turned to the shooting of ancient costume themes, combined with the gorgeous and exquisite picture format, to present to the audience scenes of unique Orientalist costume movies.

Following the 2002 "Hero", mainland audiences have shown strong enthusiasm and love for historical themes of ancient costumes, and expressed their preference for blockbusters in ancient costumes in the form of box office returns. Filmmakers also actively responded to the audience's expectations. From 2004 onwards, they produced at least one period costume film every year for the last six years. In 2006, they even produced two, or in 2008 they split "Red Cliff" into two parts. The episodes were released in two years to maximize the aesthetic needs of the audience. Even Chen Kexin, who is well-known for shooting literary and artistic films, also launched the period blockbuster "Come to Name". "Chen Kexin said when he recalled his experience in making blockbuster costumes: 'During this period, the market was prevalent in blockbuster costumes, and mainland audiences love to watch them, so we can only shoot them'".^[2]

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3. The Reception Aesthetics of Co-productions on Magic Theme

Following the decline of the period blockbuster film, in 2008, "the small-cost and high-cost fantasy film "Painted Skin" directed by Hong Kong director Chen Jiashang entered the public eye. The film won the annual box office runner-up with a box office record

of 225 million.”^[3] Successfully let the filmmakers see the huge commercial potential of the magic theme, and hope that with the help of the special effect technology in the magic theme, they can regain the audience’s love and recognition. Therefore, in the subsequent co-productions, the number of movies with magical themes appeared in the audience’s sight with an increasing posture.

Later, the magic theme began to adjust its strategy, relying on the story as the support, with special effects as the assistance, and the two-pronged approach, bringing the audience to the dual stimulation of the senses and the heart. It is hoped that the audience can obtain the double satisfaction of “from the inside to the outside”. In “Painted Skin 2” (2012), based on the ethereal and gorgeous image style, a pure visual culture that closely meets the aesthetic needs of the audience is developed, which is also a breakthrough in technical aesthetics.

Judging from the ups and downs of magical themes, the spectacle images that rely solely on selling special effects cannot satisfy the audience’s expectations for the movie. Special effects are effective as a technical means to improve the visual perception of films, but they must be based on good storytelling. The special effects that are out of the content of the story will be like the ending of the previous period costume blockbusters, gorgeous and empty, and lack of value, until they lose the enthusiasm and expectation of the audience.

4. Acceptance Aesthetics of Co-productions of Realism Themes

After experiencing the audio-visual feast brought by the blockbuster movies and magical themes, the audience’s voice for movie stories is getting louder and louder. In recent years, we have often heard comments from netizens on movies: cluelessness, chaotic logic, outdated stories, lack of connotation and other complaints. How to obtain psychological satisfaction and pleasure through watching movies has become the new expectation of the audience for movies. In 2012, Xu Anhua in “Sister Tao”, the director expressed the delicate feelings of the lonely and widowed elderly in modern society by paying attention to social moral life and using a civilian orientation and a peaceful perspective to appeal to the public to pay attention to the elderly.

In order to meet the aesthetic expectations of the audience, more and more filmmakers have joined the shooting of realistic themes. They used delicate brushstrokes to show the stories and various aspects of the real society, which aroused the resonance and deep thought of the audience. In 2013, in an atmosphere of nostalgia and realism, Chen Kexin’s “Chinese Partner” “focused on the life and emotional world of young people in that era with objective and realistic handwriting, and presented their aspirations and desires to the audience in the form of images. , Really comforted their spiritual and realistic difficulties, triggered a generation of deep emotional resonance and life experience, and also played a role of emotional catharsis for the public.”^[4]The later releases of “Dear” (2014) and “Lonely Lost” (2015) brought social hot-spot incidents of “trafficking” onto the movie screens. When paying attention to the stories of the bottom of society and the various situations of life in real life, they also aroused people’s concerns. Thoughtful. Er Dongsheng shifted the focus to the long-sleeved actors. In “I’m a Passerby”, he used the unpretentious narrative as the social record of the silent type of people.

Research has found that every year realist subjects have higher ratings on Douban. The average rating of the nine movies in the data reached 7.78 points, exceeding the ratings of most of Douban’s movies. This also shows the audience’s recognition of realistic films, and clarifies the audience’s aesthetic taste for films. That is to say, only by telling the story well can the film have absolute appeal. The scenes and special effects can achieve the purpose of deepening the theme and setting off the atmosphere, but blindly emphasize the external form and ignore the core value of the film, and the audience will think that the film flows. On the surface, it will gradually lose confidence and enthusiasm for movies.

5. Conclusion

Under the intensive production, “Hong Kong-produced films” flourish, wild, arbitrary, crazy comedies, gangster films, police films, martial arts films, action films, costume films, zombie films, ghost films and other genre films are popular. “Film critics say that ‘Hong Kong-made films’ are the supreme entertainment, crazy, naughty and rebellious, without taboos, and unreasonable.” The unique narrative style and aesthetic appearance of other films make the influence of “Hong Kong-made films” far beyond the sea. The brand of “Hong Kong Films” was also launched in the Chinese communities inside and outside.

Nowadays, most of the co-productions in order to cater to the aesthetic taste of mainland audiences, will create works in a way that the mainland likes. From a commercial point of view, the mainland market is larger, and catering to the mainland means that film returns are more secure. However, under the demands of business, the adjustments and compromises made by “Hong Kong Taste” have gradually become indifferent, which is a loss for Chinese films in terms of aesthetics. Looking back at the glorious era of Hong Kong cinema, it is hard to find a trace now. For the audience, there is a kind of regret. The “CEPA” era of Hong Kong films is not shifted by human will. Reminiscent of the attention paid to the Academy Awards in recent years, it has more and more evoked memories of the “love of the year” in Hong Kong films over the years.

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