

## *Research on the image shaping in the films of revolutionary history since the 1970s*

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**Abstract:** The portrayal of the leader image in the revolutionary historical films is an indispensable part of the creation, which has begun since the mid-1950s and has continued to this day. In terms of shaping the image of Chairman, the performance's image in different films has different focuses. After the establishment of the country, Chairman was greatly sought after. In the 1970s, revolutionary historical films appeared on the screen, and the leader image gradually changed from "deification" to returning to "mortal" to becoming a spiritual guide. This change of character shaping provides certain theoretical reference and creative ideas for the spiritual construction and effective dissemination of characters in the current revolutionary historical theme films.

Revolutionary historical films are an important part of modern Chinese films, which appear in a non-"genre" form. From the point of view of shooting technique or ideology, they form a unique "mega-film production" in China, which is an important theme of Chinese Mainstream Film and a way of propagating mainstream ideas. In terms of its content, "it reflects the major historical events, important people and important issues in the history of the Chinese revolution, which are related to the fate and future of the Chinese people; From the structural point of view, big events, big scenes of staggered. In movies about war, commanders' plans are often combined with the reality of the trenches; In the style to the documentary, but also the pursuit of an epic pattern.

The creation of revolutionary historical films originated in the late 1970s and was the result of ideological liberation in the new era. Reflecting the historical achievements of a generation of revolutionaries has become the mainstream of film and television creation. At that time, these films were called "major revolutionary historical films". Compared with the "general revolutionary historical films" before the "Cultural Revolution", they focused more on the portrayal of some major events and important figures in the history of the army, especially the portrayal of the founding fathers of the Republic.

MAO Zedong was one of the founders of China, the main founder and leader of the People's Liberation Army of China, the main founder and pioneer of the People's Republic of China, and a great proletarian revolutionist, strategist, theorist, poet and calligrapher. With his outstanding political wisdom and outstanding military ability, he was masterly and decisive in the revolutionary struggle. His image as a great leader has not only been widely recognized by the domestic people, but also won wide respect from the international community.

## 1. The attribute of "divine": the inviolability of the spiritual leader

In Chinese history, if a person can be called a "god", then he has been endowed with a certain divinity and lofty status. Especially in Chinese history, although MAO Zedong is not directly called "god", he has acquired the attribute of "god" because of his outstanding contributions and outstanding achievements.

In ancient China, there was the idea of "unity of nature and man", which believed that man and nature were interdependent and transformed, and even believed that the harmonious unity of man and nature was a state of "unity of nature and man". In this concept, "heaven" is the master and dominant force in the operation of all things in the universe; And "man" is a member of the universe. Therefore, man is not only a member of all things in the universe, but also a closely related and inseparable whole with all things in the universe<sup>[1]</sup>.

In ancient Chinese society, due to the low level of productivity, underdeveloped science and technology, limited power of ruling clique and other reasons, people tend to regard natural and social phenomena as mysterious, incomprehensible and unreasonable existence. This mysterious, incomprehensible, inexplicable existence is a kind of rational thinking to explain and control the existence. People tend to associate this unexplainable and uncontrollable existence with the divine. Therefore, in ancient Chinese society, people not only connected man with God, but also connected man with nature. For example, <Zhouyi> has similar expressions such as "Heaven walks vigorously" and "the gentleman strives for self-improvement". Under the influence of this idea, the ancient Chinese society often adopted a mysterious, fatalistic or mysticism to explain the natural and social phenomena<sup>[1]</sup>.

In Chinese history, people generally refer to themselves as the destiny of heaven, sons of gods or savior as "supernatural being" or "gods". For example, there is a saying in the<Holy Bible> that "God brings his people back to life". The formation and development of the ideology of "savior" also took place simultaneously with the process of social reform in China after the "Cultural Revolution". From the late 1970s to the early 1980s, amid the great changes brought about by China's social changes, Mao Zedong, as a great leader, his political influence has become a universal belief, with a strong appeal. Against such a background, some people began to regard Mao Zedong as a savior, hoping that he could bring light and hope to China. This thought and political consciousness has developed into a social ideology in Chinese society and has had a significant influence. The film <the Big war>three six episodes of magnificent scenes, more concentrated embodies MAO zedong control the revolutionary war, eulogizing the communist commander of the revolutionary war victory, to the history of war, the film history left a glorious milestone. The film <The Great River Flows On> about the appearance of Chairman Mao, with a broad perspective, the mystery and worship color of this "deity" is emphasized and deepened, the film for Chairman Mao is a portrait of laterodorsal, creating a sense of distance of "great man forbidden area".

“The million golden waves of the Yellow River run east like laughing loudly<sup>[2]</sup>.

Li Mai excitedly looked at the head of the nine dam, I saw in the towering Yellow River dam, Chairman MAO's tall and majestic body standing on the bank of the Yellow River. He pointed to the Yellow River, pointing to the vast land on both sides, they bathed in the dazzling golden sunshine.

Tears rolled in Li Mai's eyes, she tightly shook the hand of Shaotian Lu, strides to the Nine dam head, to the golden sun! We could see Chairman Mao coming back and reaching out his hand to Li Mai. Li Mai held Chairman MAO's hand tightly, and the tears of excitement rolled and flickered in her eyes.”

Among them, the depiction of "golden sun" and "tears rolling in Li Mai's eyes" of this artistic

conception highlights Chairman Mao's tall and greatness in the masses, giving it a "divine" color, showing the inviolability of the spiritual leader.

## 2. The attribute of "human": the life expression of the character

In revolutionary historical films since the new period, MAO's image has gradually changed from a visionary revolutionary who saved the nation to a common man with feelings of common people, profound thoughts, mild character and approachable.

Since the new period, the transformation of MAO's image in revolutionary historical films is firstly reflected in the description of his personal thought and character. From "May Fourth" to "Yan 'an" and then to "Xibaipo", he gradually grows from a revolutionary youth into a firm revolutionary and a visionary politician. For example, in the <The Founding of a Republic>, MAO grew from a naive and simple young man to a mature and sophisticated politician and military strategist. In the film <the Big war>, Mao Zedong grew from a revolutionary soldier to a statesman, strategist and strategist. He embodied the sagacity and foresight of a mature politician, which was in sharp contrast to the simplicity and simplicity of his youth. <The Birth of New China (1989)>, Mao Zedong from a less than 18 years old hot-blooded youth to grow into a mature and sophisticated politician and strategist, he is no longer that only can "fight the world" but do not know "rule the world" of the young, but in the process of the revolution gradually grew up a mature, sophisticated politician.

Secondly, the detail depiction on the screen, based on historical facts to restore the status of the characters. Since the new period, films such as <The Founding of a Republic>, <Beginning of The Great Revival (2011)>, <The Long March> began to appear on the screen. This kind of film began to bid farewell to the character-centered and individual-spirit creation method, and took the restoration of historical events and characterization of characters as the main creation method. They emphasize the authenticity of historical events and seek to "illuminate one's vision with history". Take the film <The Long March> for example. In the film, Chairman Mao fainted on the side of the road during a long march and was carried on by a stretcher team. This kind of detail description is the real representation of the daily life of the leaders and the embodiment of the leaders' life. It emphasizes the historical facts as the basis, through the restoration of historical events, highlighting the portrayal of the character of the leader<sup>[3]</sup>.

Finally, the commercialization attributes give the actor's keen observation and role appeal, such as the image of Mao Zedong played by Gu Yue (<The Birth of New China(1989)>, <the Big war>), the image of Mao Zedong played by Tang Guoqiang (<The Long March> ), and so on. In the early 21st century, Tang Guoqiang once said in an interview: "I don't think I should lock myself into one character. Of course it is good to play a character well, but I think I have I have tried my best to play Mao Zedong." By controlling the integrity and fluidity of the role, the actor has gained the audience's recognition by "similarity and dissimilarity". It seems that he has completed a high-level work of "divine similarity".

Especially in order to close the distance with the audience, the actor even "imagined" that he was Mao Zedong in the performance. In the Long March, there was a scene in which Mao Zedong wrote the poem of the Long March. Tang Guoqiang didn't use a stunt man, write poetry in person, through 360 degrees to show the style of the great man<sup>[4]</sup>.

## 3. Unity of "Man" and "God" : Spiritual internalization of leader image

Entering the expression level of the "new mainstream" image, the representative name of the leader gradually becomes the representative of consciousness, and gradually integrates into every aspect of daily life. From "an expression of consciousness of the past", to "an expression of

consciousness of the present", and then to "an expression of consciousness of the future", Mao Zedong becomes the attribute of a culture. In the image, it is symbolized, concretized and storied, representing tenacity, wisdom and patriotism. Dai Hongkai pointed out in the History of Leadership Image and "Human" -- On the Relationship between Mao Zedong's image building and Individual/national Discourse in Movies that Mao showed personal charm and leadership style in diplomacy, strong sense of national responsibility, firm principle of the country, simple and sincere, democratic and humble style, and independent national stance. In addition, foreign journalists were impressed by Mao's erudition and energy<sup>[5]</sup>. At the same time, in the new period, Mao's image exists in the spirit of inheritance, with inheritance.

"Presence" means the presence of people; and "not present" means that the spirit can be reviewed and associated in the present moment. The former is Mao Zedong (the presence of characters), while in revolutionary and historical films of the "new mainstream", such as the film <The Eight Hundred>, <The Sacrifice>, <The Battle at Lake Changjin>, etc, "Mao Zedong" himself rarely appears, either in the image of his name from others or in the form of a successor, forming an image of "absence". But the spirit conveyed is that the image of great men can be recalled and associated in the film and even in the current world. This image exists more as a symbol, rather than the "living" figure, or even the figure itself, in a kind of "absent" image. This is the inheritance of a cultural form<sup>[6]</sup>.

In the film<The Battle at Lake Changjin>, the character Mao Anying, played by Huang Xuan, asks the chairman for instructions to join the army and goes to the front line of Lake Changjin to bring clothes to the wounded. He and the recruit Wu Wanli have intersection: "On the battlefield is a hero". At the same time, he "decorated" his identity as Secretary Liu of the headquarters, and delivered the message that the entire army should pack up and continue on their way. At that time, no one knew that he was the son of the chairman. Great man has become a kind of spiritual guidance, become the name card of the country. The young generation inherits the spirit of great men, the spirit of revolution, and creates a new future. The inheritance of this spirit is not only the inheritance of history, but also the guidance and encouragement for the future.

In the film <The Battle At Lake Changjin II>, it tells a history from different angles, and realistically presenting the hardships and fearlessness of volunteer soldiers in the War of Resistance against the United States and Aid to Korea through images. At the same time, it also shows the spirit of brave struggle and unafraid of sacrifice shown by Chinese soldiers in the face of foreign invaders. It extends the narrative space in the general background, connecting the members of the "squad" with the people in the "big era". Young people participate in the war in a large era. On the one hand, it shows the indomitable fighting spirit of the volunteer soldiers in the war to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-1953). On the other hand, it also shows the inheritance of the younger generation to the sacrifice and dedication of the old heroes. They all have the blood and fire, the pain and the pain, the laughter and the tears of heroes. Therefore, this spirit has been inherited to a certain extent in the film.

In the concrete form of expression, the "new mainstream" mainly symbolizes the image of the leader through artistic means, or presents the spirit of the leader through the performance of the figure in the long history. Its essence is to use the new era of culture, new media communication means and artistic techniques to make the image of the leader more appealing and appealing<sup>[7]</sup>.

#### 4. Conclusion

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the image building of Mao Zedong in revolutionary historical films has undergone three stages of change from "the other" to "the self", and then to "the other" and "the self". In different periods, it presents different characteristics and

states, with both inheritance and development. In different social contexts, the image building of Mao Zedong also presents different value orientation and times connotation. It reflects the development track and unique personality of Chinese film.

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