

"Hidden Blade": The Integration of Commerce and Art

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Abstract: The movie "Hidden Blade" was released during the Spring Festival. As a special New Year's film, it is full of exquisite "Cheng Er" style in both subject matter and content. The film uses a puzzle-style narrative in a turbulent era to create an immersive and ultimate beauty, bringing the audience better audio-visual enjoyment. As an atypical theme movie, "Hidden Blade" is not a "mission target" spy movie, but more of a "Cheng Er style". Between "change" and "unchangedness", he not only retains his own personality and style, but also creates new commercial films that transcend the assembly line production model.

"Hidden Blade" is an epic about nameless people. "Behind the nameless are thousands of names."

Some people say that Cheng Er's "The Death of Romance" is like a jar of fine wine, which becomes more and more fragrant the longer it is put. Cheng Er said: "Hidden Blade" is ready to drink after opening the lid.[1] The core story of the film took place during the Anti-Japanese War. The director told the story of the unknown heroes who fought desperately against all forces on the hidden front, and then showed their actions, which made an irreplaceable contribution to the victory of the war against Japan. As an atypical theme movie, "Hidden Blade" is not a "mission target" spy movie, but more of a "Cheng Er style". Between "change" and "unchanged", he not only retains his own personality and style, but also creates a non-assembly-line "super commercial film". Compared with Cheng Er's earlier works, "Hidden Blade", a work that took "seven years to sharpen a sword", is more comfortable and mature in terms of lens language and narrative style.

It is not easy for the director to create a film with a grand story background. "Hidden Blade" overcomes this difficulty. The whole work has gorgeous images, an epic structure and profound cultural connotations. Director Cheng Er skillfully uses a variety of film and television techniques. In a superb audio-visual atmosphere, his restrained artistic expression complements the gripping story. The clever use of metaphorical montage and the creation of plump and three-dimensional round characters not only enhance the quality of the film, but also enrich the main content of the entire film and enhance the artistic appeal of the film. The condensed shots, unique composition, deep color reproduction, and abrupt film rhythm give the film a distinct personal touch of the director. It can be said that the director completed the narrative and conception under extremely limited conditions. Through reasonable planning and artistic expression, he conveyed rich humanistic emotions and presented excellent aesthetic and artistic effects.

1. Restraint and restraint in artistic expression

Chinese local films have always had the shortcoming of insufficient diversification in genres, and this is especially true for films with main themes. The so-called main theme film refers to significant revolutionary historical genre films that fully embody mainstream ideology. They are realistic films that are close to the lives of ordinary audiences, promote mainstream values, and celebrate human life. Main theme movies are not only an important part of the country's strategy of cultural power, but also play an important role in shaping the ideological concepts of the public, especially the majority of young people, guiding values, and educating social morality. Since the concept of "main melody" was proposed, many high-quality typical works have appeared, which to a certain extent has enriched the genre of main melody movies. However, in recent years, the homogenization trend of main theme movies has become more and more serious, and the way of telling Chinese stories still appears to be single.

"Hidden Blade" is an atypical theme movie. The movie focuses on the unknown hero's spiritual quality of sacrificing his life for righteousness and considering death as home. Although it is a spy film, director Cheng Er abandoned traditional narrative techniques and instead used flashbacks, sequences, and interludes. In the past, it was very rare to use non-linear methods to complete narratives in film art. But around the 1990s, this non-linear narrative method began to develop rapidly. The most representative directors include: Quentin, Nolan, etc. They integrated non-linear narrative into Hollywood movies and achieved good results[2].

Cheng Er once mentioned that he likes director Quentin very much, and Quentin's "Pulp Fiction" is a masterpiece of non-linear narrative. Seemingly influenced by Quentin, director Cheng Er also adopted a non-linear narrative method to fragment and reorganize the plot. This is a very advanced technique that disrupts the rhythm of the narrative and creates suspense for the audience. At the same time, it engages the audience in intricately connected plots, keeping their attention high and analyzing cause and effect. Ultimately, the audience will have a moment of enlightenment and realization. For example, at the beginning of "Hidden Blade", there are several seemingly unrelated scenes about Mr. He and Ms. Chen. These shots give the audience a "clueless" and "confused" feeling, which will raise big question marks in the audience. This is because these shots are divorced from the narrative, and it is precisely the emotions displayed by these characters and their own states that bring a sense of discontinuity to the audience. And when the story is again driven by the plot and then weaved, it is no longer just a narrative link. This kind of non-linear telling of the story puts the characters in a state of change through insertions and flashbacks, and thus effectively reorganizes the dynamic plot.

The film is confusing but not obscure, like a puzzle game. Everyone in the film is a clue, a fragment, an existence that affects the whole body. These clues come together to form a huge puzzle.

Simple movies can cater to most people, but the director said, "Respect the audience. The audience should not be underestimated. The structure has its own charm. This charm is one of the cores of the film itself." He hopes that what the audience sees is the real good movie. "More commercial than commercial, more artistic than art, it is a film ideal that can be fought for." This is exactly what Cheng Er has always wanted to do.

The characters in the film have no names, but are referred to as "Director He", "Mr. Ye", "Ms. Chen", etc. Throughout Cheng Er's film creation, from his graduation work "Criminals" to "The Third Man" and "Border Storm", there is no situation where the characters in the movie have no names. But there have been signs of this "nameless group portrait" since "The Death of Romance", and in "Nameless", the characters have no names. This is an act of "breaking the subject". No name means no one. The absolute protagonist, but the relative group, also echoes the theme.

2. The exquisite and unique metaphor construction

A film and television work with high artistic standards not only needs to be told in a suitable narrative method, but also needs to use exquisite and unique metaphors one after another to externalize and present the meaning of the story. Metaphorical montage is a unique artistic technique in film art. Creators can express a certain meaning implicitly and vividly through the comparison of shots or scenes. This technique often highlights certain similar characteristics between different things to arouse the audience's association, understand the director's meaning and appreciate the emotional color of the event. Metaphorical montage combines great generalization power with extremely concise expression techniques, organically combining ontology and metaphor, which not only avoids being blunt and far-fetched, but also has strong emotional appeal. In this film, whether it is "two dogs", or "Napoleon biscuits", "pickled live shrimp" or "lamb", the director places these metaphors in special positions, and through mutual connection, the audience is prompted to have emotions related to them. His associations and imagination are used to implicitly express the director's subjective thoughts and emotions. These metaphorical shots have little interference with the normal narrative and have the effect of emphasizing and reminding the subject.

Cheng Er himself said that he never writes the outline of a story, but when investors want to see the outline, he writes the script first, and then refines the outline based on the script. Director Cheng Er will conceive most of the film before shooting, such as lighting, composition and the rhythm of post-production editing. Narrative Structure From the very beginning of his writing, he had already thought about how to present the story completely to the audience [3].

In the film, a dog named Roosevelt is wearing goggles and is leisurely on a plane in the sky, while the dog owner is bombing the land. The camera turns to another dog on the bombed land, in the rain, in Among the ruins, a destitute man with one leg struggled to find shelter, only to be ridiculed and driven away.

The contrast between the two dogs is also the contrast between the situations of the two countries. "I would rather be a dog of peace than a man in troubled times." However, in troubled times, dogs are not as good as dogs, and people are not as good as dogs. Just like the Chinese were bullied and killed by the Japanese and turned into "lost dogs", which made the audience feel like they could see the tragedy of that era. Secondly, the dog's leg is lame, which also implies that at that time, it wanted to resist Japan but had a "lame leg" in terms of strength, and a "dog leg" that was in harmony with the Japanese internally and externally. Napoleon cake, Napoleon is a big shot in France and is regarded as a hero. It stands in stark contrast to the "Hidden Blade," as its production process is complex, much like the intricacies of espionage, highlighting the nameless heroes of wartime. "A white lamb that witnesses tragedy stands under the spotlight, innocent. At this moment, the audience imagines it finding redemption, but it is trapped within the window frame. In the next second, it becomes a piece of meat for the Japanese army. Both the sheep and the people are innocent, yet they are cruelly killed. In the eyes of the Japanese army, there is no difference between sheep and humans; this sheep is just a hook. At that moment, the audience is stirred with intense hatred, an emotion that lingers throughout the viewing experience. Director Cheng Er uses these metaphors to reveal the historical background, propel the plot, and express his deeper artistic contemplation." [4]

3. The ultimate aesthetics of audio-visual language

The rich colors like oil paintings, extremely neat composition, and overall dark low saturation complement the overall high-contrast tone of the movie. It is full of retro flavor and is a rare visual aesthetic feast. Cheng Er is a director who is very good at using fixed shots. Generally speaking, if

the fixed lens is not used well, it will cause visual fatigue to the audience, because the perspective is relatively single and the frame of the picture is also limited, which can easily create a sense of fragmentation. Director Cheng Er's philosophy is that if the camera wants to move, there must be a reason why it must be moved. This is somewhat similar to Andre Bazin's concept of film realism: Bazin believes that film is an art form that can most truly reproduce reality. He advocates that films should retain the integrity and continuity of reality as much as possible, while Not through montage or other techniques to create new meaning. He believes that the essence of film is photography, and the essence of photography is to capture the passage of time. People often look around and look around in life, but sometimes they also need to stare at objects for a long time and look at them carefully. As the third eye of human beings, the camera's viewpoint is stable when shooting fixed shots, and it is also a shooting method that is most consistent with the human "gaze" state [5].

Cheng Er believes that a fixed lens with a fixed frame can create a relatively stable viewing space, which has a natural advantage in showing the details of the picture. He believes that a good film composition should withstand scrutiny, and even a single frame should achieve the ultimate beauty. Therefore, he carefully determined each fixed camera position to serve the film as a whole, so that the fixed shots can show details in a delicate way and highlight the unique beauty of static shapes.

When the workers looked up in despair, in their eyes looking up at the light above the only patio before they died, there was helplessness, survival, and the numbness of being bullied for a long time. The poured cement hit the heart directly and had a visual impact. In Laman, director Cheng Er uses a consistent overhead view to show the insignificance and helplessness of people being swallowed up by the torrent of fate and war. It shows the humiliation and unyielding fighting spirit of the Chinese nation in the severe disaster. It is also an inner portrayal of the director's struggle to survive in adversity and to realize his own value.

When Mr. He and Mr. Ye were fighting, they used voyeuristic footage and documentary-style footage with obvious shaking, indicating that someone was watching them, so in order to get rid of suspicion, the two had to fight with real guns. "Hidden Blade" inherits the "programmatic style" of "Romancing the Downbeat" in that it has no unnecessary lines throughout. Every frame of the picture is endlessly memorable, and the stunning scene "There is light at the end of the tunnel". At the end of the film, the director pays tribute to the work of photographer He Fan, which is very interesting and meaningful, not abrupt but surprising. In the movie, Mr. Ye can finally walk under the sun like all living beings. The peaceful and warm scenes convey the spirit of the city after going through hardships. The "accented" audio-visual language is the highly recognizable "author's signature" in his works. The entire film the film's narrative is smooth, without any sense of sloppiness. The connection between shots and scenes is natural and flexible. The film's visual artistic presentation gives the film a significance that transcends the times. The director has always pursued the artistic sense of screen modeling and refused to bow to commercialization. Cheng Er seems to be so unique and has his own extraordinary aesthetic system [6].

4. Three-dimensional shaping of round figures

Round characters refer to characters with complex personality traits in movies. The characters are relatively full-bodied. Such characters are often ambiguous and changeable characters in movies. The characteristic is that the character has a process of formation and development, and is not black and white. Jibai breaks the simple classification method of all good and all bad, and portrays characters according to the true face of life. Although "Unnamed" is "unnamed", its characters are very three-dimensional and full, with distinctive round character characteristics.

Among the female characters, Jiang Shuying plays a female spy with an assassination mission,

but several of her assassination plans ended in failure. She originally had several opportunities to kill Minister Tang, played by Dong Chengpeng, but she did not do it because she had an inappropriate feeling for Minister Tang, which also led to her identity being exposed. After the assassination failed, she was arrested and killed in a wasteland. It breaks the stereotyped plot of "the hero is sad about the beauty". Because Tony Leung is also in this movie, it is easy for the audience to think of Wang Jiazhi in "Lust, Caution", which is also a "dream linkage" of the characters.

In addition to the remarkable character creation of Mr. Ye played by Wang Yibo and Mr. He played by Tony Leung, Mr. Zhang played by Huang Lei who escaped from the battle is also worth discussing. Mr. Zhang is a typical round character. He is entangled in establishing a destiny for the troubled times and wandering about his own place in the times. However, his cowardice can only allow him to survive in the troubled times. He is a person with a very unstable stance. He said: "I am a weak person and cannot adapt to the era of great changes. My father left me a piece of land on the mountain where I can see the Li River." This line is accompanied by the actor's obsequiousness and nagging, and reflects well the psychological state of such characters. We cannot say that he is an absolute "bad guy". Like most ordinary people, he does not have strong beliefs and wills and eventually becomes a victim of the times.

Whether Mr. Zhang joined the revolution or chose to go home to work as a farmer, or mutiny, it was not his ideal and pursuit, these were just a choice for him to preserve his life, therefore, it was more from the side of the bloodshed of the revolutionary martyrs, their greatness, far beyond imagination. Whether Mr. Zhang joins the revolution, chooses to go home to farm, or rebels, it is not his ideal or what he pursues. For him, these are just choices that can save his own life. Therefore, he is all the more able to highlight the greatness of the martyrs who threw themselves into the revolution with passion, and their greatness is far beyond imagination.

The creation of the character of Mr. Zhang makes the character more three-dimensional and full. He represents the epitome of many people and the appearance of all living beings in that era. During the Anti-Japanese War, many people retreated midway, and Mr. Zhang was also a "very contradictory" character. Although the world and people are not black and white, his choice was cowardly. A person with firm beliefs would not run away from the battlefield. He had unconfidence and wrong judgment about the situation at that time. The character of Mr. Zhang is very real. The director did not directly criticize this character, but used a series of narratives to express the historical process and the different choices of different people in society at that time, create flesh-and-blood characters, and give the audience the right to speak.

5. Conclusion

In the dark night, thousands of stars can be seen, and in the light of the lamp, a wisp of dust can be seen. The movie "Hidden Blade" tells the story of unknown heroes who sacrificed their lives to defend the motherland and pass on information during the Anti-Japanese War. The film uses the narrative art of intertwining time and space, relying on multiple narrative perspectives, allowing the narrative structure of the film to be relaxed and relaxed, and showing the heavy historical memory in the lens, presenting unique artistic characteristics and aesthetic interests. [7] Throughout the film, most Chinese people have no names, while Japanese people, such as important characters like Hiroiyuki Mori, have names. "Resisters can be nameless, but perpetrators cannot be hidden." This also represents the director's thought. The nameless person can be you, me, or anyone. He is the one who has been hurt and trampled on in this land. A person is a person who sacrifices, suffers, is sad, and resists. The nameless person has no name but also countless names. As individuals, they can be nameless, and their success does not have to be in my realm. As nameless people, they are creating history, and I must be responsible for their success. The island period was the darkest period before

dawn. Countless underground workers did not have their own names. In other words, they abandoned themselves, devoted themselves to their ideals, and devoted themselves to the revolution. The title that appears at the end of the film makes the audience feel the light, which is the burning light of faith of the unknown heroes on the hidden front. The echoes of history are something we cannot forget.

"Literary and artistic works cannot be slaves to the market. They cannot blindly cater to the audience and be led by the market." "Hidden Blade" is a work that can convey advanced concepts, profound thoughts, correct values and noble spirit, and can leave a mark on people's soul. This work is not a "popcorn movie" and can withstand people's thinking and scrutiny. Not following the crowd and concentrating on studying movies and art is the charm of Cheng Er's movies and the charm of Cheng Er himself.

"Although there are thousands of people, I will go." The unknown ones gather and disperse, and the coveted ones come and go. The nameless person is not a person, but a type of person, a group of people, because some heroes have no chance to leave their names. What the nameless people care about is not the name, but the fate of the country. Behind the nameless people are thousands of names, unknown people also have a name.

The nameless ones are numerous. And "Unnamed" erects a monument for the unknown.

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