

“Post-Truth”: Diversified Visual Expression of Social Issues

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Abstract. The movie “Post-Truth” was released in 2023, which, as always, continues its director Da Peng’s direction of comedy creation while having a new expansion. In this commercial comedy film, Da Peng incorporates emerging elements such as livestreaming and room escape, and shows social issues such as cyber violence, rumor spreading, and school bullying, which are closely related to the current reality. The film expresses serious social issues in a comedic way. This article will focus on the Chinese chivalrous spirit, genre hybridity, audiovisual presentation and imagery expression of the film, analyzing its diversified visual expression of social issues.

Keywords: “Post-Truth”; Comedic; Chinese chivalry; Genre Hybridity.

1. Introduction

The movie "Post-Truth" adopts a two-line narrative, two different narrative threads are different presentations by Da Peng on the current hot issues in the society. Han Lu, a white-collar worker who donated millions to the orphanage during her lifetime, faces the danger of being "moved to the grave" after her death due to rumors; Wei Pingan suffers cyber violence on his way to clear Han Lu's name; and his daughter Wei Moli is bullied at school for clearing up her classmates' wrongdoings. Da peng uses a sharp angle to expose the endless harm caused by rumors in this "post-truth" era, which is profound and thought-provoking. The film uses diverse video forms to satirize the real-life network scandal and farce.

2. Chinese Chivalry: Thematic Expression of Chinese Style

"Chivalry" is a unique product of Chinese culture, resulting from a combination of social history and Chinese cultural memory. [1] The spirit of Chinese chivalry has not only existed in martial arts movies, but has also been integrated into the creation of various types of movies. In the movie "Post-Truth", director Da peng has made the spirit of Chinese chivalry consistent. The two "chivalrous" characters in the movie are Han Lu and Wei Pingan. Han Lu grew up as a white-collar worker in the city from a helpless orphan, and after her boyfriend's accidental death and her own cancer diagnosis, she chose to accept it and donated a huge amount of money to the orphanage, waiting for the end of her life; Wei Pingan was imprisoned for his friend's injustice in his early years, and after his release from prison as a graveyard salesman, he encountered Han Lu, a customer who had dumped his family's money to make a donation, and he had a heartfelt admiration for her chivalrous spirit. Wei Pingan's heartfelt admiration for Han Lu's spirit of Chinese chivalry led Wei Pingan and Han Lu to establish a kind of "heroic bond" in addition to their business relationship, which is also the core foundation of Wei Pingan's desperate attempts to dispel rumors about her. Even though Wei Pingan's own life is still a mess, when he faces Han Lu's matter, knowing that he may lose his job or suffer more serious difficulties, he never gives up and insists on clearing Han Lu's name, just for the sake of chivalry in his heart, and for the phrase "there is true love in the world".

The connection between the two chivalrous persons lies in the fact that even after Han Lu's death, when she was "rumored to be yellow" and faced with the crisis of having her grave moved, there was still a small man with a Chinese chivalrous spirit like Wei Pingan who helped her clear her name at any cost. In the movie's colorful eggs, we can learn that Wei Pingan's chivalry began with the bottle of Coke when Han Lu was a child. At the same time, perhaps there are more than just these two

chivalrous people, there is also a commonly used mirror image of the play - Wei Moli, Wei Pingan's daughter, also encountered the dilemma of whether to fight for the righteousness of his friends, this contrasting setup is undoubtedly for the story line and the character arc of the line of progression effect. The birthmark on Wei's leg is not just a birthmark, it also represents everything related to rumors and privacy. Suppressing one's own kind is an animal's instinct engraved in its DNA, and revealing other people's scars and slandering others behind their backs are precisely the common means of suppressing one's own kind. The purpose of setting up this part of the movie is to condemn school violence and at the same time teach people how to correctly face this kind of school violence, which is mainly based on rumors and exposing privacy. In the second half of the movie, before contacting his daughter, Wei Pingan has already broken down and given up, but when he learns that his daughter has stepped out of the shadows and no longer hides her birthmark, he regains his motivation. At this point he is burdened with his own chivalrous obsession, Han Lu's injustice and his daughter's encouragement, which is why he perseveres to the end.

From the storyline setting, whether it is Wei Pingan seeking the truth road, or Wei Moli for friends to seek justice road, in the end of the story have a good ending - Wei Pingan successfully found the source of the rumors, for Han Lu cleared the wrongdoing, but also gained the support of the community and praised; Although Wei Moli suffered from school violence for helping her friends, in the end the abuser was duly punished, and she became confident, no longer fearful of her birthmark, and was able to get along better with her classmates. The movie as a whole is a ridiculous, brutal story with a warm ending that tries to ease the audience's anxiety while exposing the social crisis. The ending scene of "Wish You Peace" sung by Mao Buyi with the "666" fireworks prepared by Han Lu for Wei Pingan's birthday by the riverside is also a side effect to tell the audience that chivalry is rewarded with the realization of warm and realistic care; Kindness eventually reverberates, providing a place for the audience to express their emotions while creating an empathetic connection with them.

3. Genre Hybridity: Narration of Da Peng's Style

The movie combines the elements of three genres: comedy, road movie, and suspense movie into one narrative. From the composition of the plot, the film is filled with a large number of comedic colors, because of a single force majeure and lead to the characters often make the audience unexpected absurd actions, which leads to absurd results, each character naturally placed in the environment, through the character behavior naturally creates a comedic effect. Such as the beginning of the movie, Wei Pingan went to attend his daughter's concert but was rejected for being late, compared to ordinary people, he did not give up, and chose to climb the water pipe way into the venue, down from the stage into the audience, and then in the quiet of the concert hall to answer the phone loudly, out of place with the surroundings, the most surprising thing is that his daughter's stepdad was actually able to very enthusiastic and Wei Pingan greetings. As well as a series of moves in the escape room when Wei Pingan goes to look for his sister Wei Ruyi later on, and so on. With a large number of comedy sound effects and editing rhythmic pause, which in the characterization at the same time also fit with the theme, to achieve a certain effect of satirical comedy.

In the development of the story, a trip to Inner Mongolia in search of "Mr. Perfect 421" is the plot point, and the second half of the story incorporates the characteristics of the road movie genre to a certain extent. There are various means of transportation, changes in the natural environment and human landscape, and the story takes place on the road. The constant changes in the scene drive the story and the characters' mentality. Wei Pingan's change of transportation in the process of searching for the truth - from a car to a car by foot - also implies his psychological change - from conviction to giving up to perseverance. The end of the journey also represents the realization of the truth. This adds interest to the movie and enriches the characters and storyline. In terms of narrative technique, each plot of the film is intertwined and revolves around the same purpose - what is the truth of the rumor? Using classic Hollywood narrative techniques, the film sets up suspense - looking for clues - finding clues - chasing clues - and the truth comes out. Its narrative approach follows the law of

creation, in the story as a whole can meet the audience's expectations at the same time, but also in the framework of the suspenseful narrative structure, the use of comedy to build a deeper level of the theme of the intention to bring the audience a deeper level of thinking. In the process of searching for the source of the rumor, from Feng to Tony in the pet store to Wei Ruyi and finally to the netizens in Inner Mongolia, ostensibly searching for the source of the rumor, in fact, through the process of searching to satirize the absurdity of the event of "rumor spreading rumor", through the process of searching, the plot continues to promote the continuous development of the story, a vivid image of the "rumor-mongering". Through the process of searching, the plot and story development, it vividly emphasizes the theme of "rumor-mongering with one mouth, rumor-dispelling with one leg". The use of a mixture of genres to describe a realist story has, to a certain extent, solved the shortcomings of most realist movies, which are hard and didactic. China has never lacked realist themes, but how to express them in a more standardized and innovative way is a big problem. The multi-genre narrative strategy of "Post-Truth" undoubtedly provides a new and referable creative idea for future realist creators.

4. Audiovisual Presentation: Visual Impact and Comedy Traits Creation

"Cinema, first and foremost, is undoubtedly movement, and it was this movement that made the earliest moviegoers marvel at the sight of leaves swaying in the breeze or a train coming straight at them. For this reason, movement is precisely the most distinctive and important feature of the cinematograph." [2] Marcel Mardin once said this in "Movie Language". Realistic style movies often present stories close to daily life. With the continuous development and updating of photographic equipment, camera technology is also constantly developing and changing, and the movement pattern of the camera is one of the most important forms of expression in the creation of movie images. The movie also uses a variety of camera modes to increase the comedic effect. Roc chases the rumor monger to Chifeng, runs on the top of the train in parallel and jumps down in vertical, which is a strong combination of the two. There is also a video with his daughter that section, riding on a herdsman old man looking for a signal, is also a vertical lens, first to show the localization after the panorama, unexpectedly funny. While in the temple scene, when Ms. Feng discovers that Wei Pingan is carrying away Feng Qiangqiang's ashes, the film uses a panoramic view to show it, placing the audience in God's perspective to show this ridiculous and laughable discovery process, which takes the whole movie's comedic effect to another level.

In the beginning of the movie, although the conventional technique of "multiple scenes edited and superimposed on each other" is used to show Wei Pingan's process of washing his car, that is, the display of daily life, it is coherent and progressive, which speeds up the pace of the movie. It also implies that the theme of the film, washing away the dust on the car, also refers to the process of washing away the rumors, suggesting that this is a story of finding innocence. Most of the editing rhythm shaping uses the sound first method to speed up the pace of the movie. When Wei Pingan climbs into the concert performance, the "Carmen Overture" played in the concert shows Wei Pingan as heroic and fearless as a bullfighter. After Wei Pingan receives a phone call, Qi Zhifu said something to find him, and with the help of Beethoven's "Symphony of Fate" played in the concert to carry out the transition, in the picture connects smoothly at the same time can imply that Wei Pingan's trip is not calm. On Wei Pingan's way back to the company, the trunk is wide open, which on the one hand shows Wei Pingan's woes, and on the other hand, the "wide-open mouth of the trunk" also represents the network spammers, who are attacking everything with their mouths wide open at all times. The arrangement of the characters' dialogues is also very elaborate, showing the main idea of the movie to the fullest. "There is true love in the world", "Do what you think is right", in these dialogues containing blood and tears inspired Wei Pingan father and daughter to complete the perseverance of justice. The "alphabet play" lines in the scene with Boss Jin, while creating a comedic effect, satirize the paparazzi entertainment journalists and the gullible masses, use the frequent

queuing and the difference in Boss Jin's attitude to satirize formalism and corruption, and bring to light the inferiority of the whole human society in an absurd and realistic story.

The design of light and shadow is one of the very important elements in the styling of the movie screen. Highly saturated colors are used in most of the shots in the film. This use of light and shadow is not only for the aesthetics of the picture, but also for the story, for the theme, for the presentation of emotions and moods, and for adding visual impact and comedic effects. In these outdoor scenes such as Wei Pingan and Han Lu determining the location of the cemetery and going to see Han Lu's grave, basically natural light is used during the daytime, but when the white horse suddenly appears on the road, a ray of fantastic light shines on Wei Pingan's face through the window of the car, bringing Wei Pingan towards the orphanage, all of them are shaped in a highly saturated way in terms of post-coloring to increase the dramatic effect and at the same time lay the groundwork for the creation of a comedic effect later on. In the nighttime outdoor rain scene where Ms. Feng digs up the urn of Feng Qiangqiang, however, cooler lights are used to show that things are not going as well as Wei Pingan would have liked. More stylized lighting was used indoors, along with the addition of "silhouette light" in the character lighting. In addition to creating an objective sense of reality, but also on the basis of reality, Wei Pingan, despite Qi Zhifu's obstruction, insisted on clearing Han Lu's name, when he said "there is true love in the world", although the room is still dark, but the active light from the simulated street lamps outside the window and the small lamps placed in the house of the bed emit a highly saturated warm light on Wei Pingan, showing his strength and courage, and also his ability to be a good person. In the haunted house scene the director and cinematographer also used light effects to achieve visual effects while at the same time rendering or creating narrative moods, thus achieving visual effects. First of all, the cold colors such as green and blue were used to render the atmosphere of the haunted house, and when Wei Ruyi appeared in the image of an upside-down female ghost, the screen used green and warm yellow lights to enrich the layers of the screen and create a sense of impact.

5. Image of White Horse: As an Imagery Symbol

The film uses imagery to participate in the film narrative, adding symbolic romanticism to realism. Imagery, as a subjectivized image, is endowed with strong emotional and rational values and has a special meaning. Imagery serves as the generation and manifestation of people's aesthetic experience in movie narratives. It is a dynamic process, which occurs in the imagination and creation triggered by the movie narrative, and regenerates in the reflection of emotional experience and imaginative construction.[3] Movie imagery theory takes respecting the material reality and the essential power of human being as the premise, and its essence is to pursue "images with life" and "images with meaning". Movie Imagery Theory can not only fill the lack of image connotation caused by story ontology, but also make up for the deficiency of Context Theory, which is difficult to effectively connect with the movie text. [4] Through the use of imagery, "Post-Truth" integrates the reality and artistry of the movie and achieves a perfect balance. In terms of plot content, the "white horse" in "Post-Truth" is exactly the same. The imagery of "white horse" appears many times in the movie in both dynamic and static ways, but every time it appears, the events will take a turn for the better. The first time the dynamic image of the "white horse" appears is when Wei Pingan decides to investigate the truth of Han Lu's case. The "white horse" leads Wei Pingan to the orphanage, and the picture of the white horse hangs in Ms. Feng's office, so Wei Pingan convinces Ms. Feng with the white horse, and gets time to investigate; the "white horse" is also used in the movie. Wei Pingan used the white horse to convince Ms. Feng and gained time for the investigation; the "white horse" appeared for the second time in a static way in the circle of friends of Qi Zhifu's old husband, and a group of people surrounded it, held it and rode it, and the "white horse" was like the truth here, being suppressed and humiliated by a group of people. The second appearance of the dynamic image of the "white horse" on the prairie in Inner Mongolia can be seen as Wei Pingan's "spiritual refueling station". After learning that his daughter has been bullied in school, Wei Pingan is ready to give up his quest for the

truth and return home to take care of his daughter, when the white horse appears once again, and Wei Pingan is then encouraged by his daughter to continue to pursue the truth. The film repeatedly links the white horse with Han Lu, and there are also hints that the white horse is a symbol of Han Lu, as an addition to the text, it seems that Han Lu has died, but in fact the whole event is Han Lu but strings together the whole event. Imagination of the object, the form is transformed into the content itself, to achieve a high degree of unity of expressiveness and reproduction, symbolism.

In addition to the white horse, the book bag given to his daughter by Pingan Wei, the rain scene and cola that appear in the movie, and the fireworks at the end of the movie are also the embodiment and use of imagery. When Wei Pingan was searching for the truth in Inner Mongolia, he kept his daughter's schoolbag with him. As Wei Pingan's story line progresses, it also implies that his daughter is finally determined to tell the truth to her teacher to clear her classmates' name. Thematically, the "white horse" and "fireworks" are unrealistic as romantic features, and as a dramatization to neutralize the realism of the film, the film conveys a thought-provoking theme to the audience, while at the same time focusing on the affirmation of goodness and narrow-mindedness to help the audience release their inner emotions and gain a better understanding of the world. Helping the audience to release their inner emotions and gain comfort, the movie becomes a good example of combining imagery and realism in a movie. In the end credits, Da peng writes, "Dedicated to the Coke-loving Dashing Brother," who is also known as Zhao Yingjun, and who once wrote, "Since I was a kid, I've always loved the rain, and if it rains hard and windy one evening, that's when I'll come to see you. Both Coke and rain are Da peng's nostalgia for Brother Dashing. In addition to satirizing reality, this movie is about a middle-aged man with a teenage heart who gets burned by his dreams. All of Wei Pingan's obsessions can be seen as another expression of the lyrics of "All Choose C". That's why Coke is not a gift for Brother Dashing, the movie is.

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