

# Analyze the innovative exploration of war history movies from "Eight Hundred"

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**Abstract:** War movies in the new era not only bear the box office, but also bear a nation's attitude towards history and its own cognition. The innovation of technology, the liberation of ideas and the increasing distance of time and space between the audience and history make the development of war films face new problems and challenges. More and more mainstream war movies still do not break the traditional mainstream war movies' plot conception, characterization and didactic meaning are too rigid. As one of the few successful war movies in recent years, Babai overturns the flat characters in traditional movies and uses imagistic symbols interspersed with each other, which is a major breakthrough. And in the plot of a large number of "black and white contrast" to the film invisibly added a bit of tragedy. At the end of the film, the image of the white horse and the rat will be displayed, and the artistic depth of the film will be raised abruptly. These new explorations in the film will undoubtedly become an important reference for future war films.

**Keywords:** War historical film; Subversion and deconstruction; Image interpenetration; Eight hundred.

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## 1. First, the subversion and deconstruction of the flat character image

The film Babai is based on a 1937 battle between the guards of the Sixing warehouse, it tells the story of the "Eight hundred strong men" of the National Revolutionary Army guarding the Suzhou River at the end of the Battle of Shanghai. The Battle of Shanghai was one of the largest battles in the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression. The heroic deeds of 800 strong men inspired countless Chinese people. In the movie, all the soldiers support the flag with flesh and blood, a soldier was beaten and mangled, even if killed, but also tenacious with their last strength to support the flag. It is this national spirit, which has been passed down from generation to generation and takes patriotism as the core, that makes the Chinese nation prosperous today. The character image is the core of the film. One of the most important tasks in the art of film and television is to depict the vivid character image. Eight Hundred has made a subversive change in the overall image shaping of the characters, and has made a new attempt in the psychological shaping of the characters. The whole film uses the strategy of "seeing a glimpse and seeing the whole leopard" to explore the growing process of heroes from the perspective of small characters, and the film downplays individual heroism.

On the level of audio-visual language expression in the film, Xie Jinyuan's Cantonese, Duan Wu's Hubei dialect, Zhu Shengzhong's Shaanxi dialect, Yang Ruifu's Tianjin dialect, etc., make use of the differences of dialects to create a hundred people and a hundred different forms, which is a metaphor for the people of the whole country to resist the Japanese invaders in the face of the national disaster. The gruesome scene in which the cowardly Jiang Wu's ear is wounded by a bullet has an empathic effect on the audience. The post war history movies mainly depict the positive image of characters, and the hero is perfect. The flat character image makes the movie lack of authenticity and freshness. For

example, Ying Yunwei's Eight Hundred Strong Men in 1938 focused on the heroic image of eight hundred strong men who were brave and fearless, and depicted the atrocious, bloody, weak and incompetent Japanese soldiers. But Guan Hu's "Eight Hundred" begins with footage of a group of army deserters, some of whom are temporary farmers, some of whom are underage boy scouts, some of whom are mere literati. In the face of bullets, they do not know what to do, even if the enemy killed his uncle, also dare not shoot revenge. Facing the direct shot, Jiang Wu hid in the sack like an ostrich. Dragon Boat Festival and the old abacus always wanted to escape...The depiction of the details of the characters in the scenes of the magnificent war has produced a strong contrast, but also reflects the personal confusion and smallness in the face of war. It shows his pursuit of creating three-dimensional characters, which broadens the dimension of our understanding of heroes. Heroes are also ordinary people, who had ordinary, weak and struggle before becoming heroes.

The film's exploration and reflection on human nature is a rare feature of war history films in recent years. Before the war began, the South Coast of the Chinese concession to the defeat of the performance of the extreme apathetic, even some people bet on the opposite side of the military in the Japanese guns can hold on to how long. In the noise of the shouts opened the criticism and reflection on the "national character", when we have not recovered from the irony, the scene of the troupe reminds people of the word "theater". South coast people with eight hundred strong men again and again beat back the Japanese attack, the national spirit is quietly awakening, they arouse the blood of the people in the sound of the cry.

## 2. Second, the documentary exploration of historical presentation

References As a popular art, film has a wide range of communication, which is of great significance to the shaping of the mass ideology and morality and the guidance of ideology in the contemporary society. Eight Hundred

integrates the mainstream ideology of contemporary society with history, and completes the deep restoration of history from a neutral Angle to the maximum extent. The basic starting point of Bazin's theory of documentary film is to respect the original appearance of things and the actual time and space where things are located. In artistic creation, it creates drama without damaging the true nature of things, shows the emotions of characters, and conveys social themes. The battle of Sixing Warehouse is of symbolic significance in the war of Resistance against Japanese aggression. The "Eight Hundred Heroes" is often written, from Ying Yunwei's "Eight Hundred Heroes" in 1938 to Ding Shanxi's "Eight Hundred Heroes" in 1975, to the War on the Other Side directed by Li Xin in 2008, and finally to Guan Hu's "Eight Hundred" in 2020. In different periods, there are new explorations in the writing of the Four Lines Warehouse defense battle, but it is obvious that "Eight hundred strong men" is becoming more and more concrete and closer to the historical truth. As a realistic creator, Guan Hu is good at shaping the image of the hero who dares to break the existing "rules", so the characters in the film Babai are very three-dimensional. Although the film "Eight Hundred" mainly shows the image of the Kuomintang in the Anti-Japanese War, but the essence is to present the hidden historical details, which requires great courage. War historical films dominated the Chinese film market for a long time. China shot a lot of films with war themes. For example, in the film "Tunnel Warfare", the importance of the wounded soldiers was the first. In the film Yang Shanzhou, the depiction of Yang Shanzhou's selflessness is too deliberate. Different periods have different value tendencies for films. We cannot deny the mainstream ideas contained in these films at that time, but they cannot meet the aesthetic needs of the audience. The cognition of historical facts is ideological in nature. Compared with traditional war history films, Babai does not take a clear stand, and uses a local army unit in the opening shot. The shot itself marks a historical attitude that is more subjective in its stance and seeks to represent history from the perspective of a third party.

Of course, the technical aspects of the film were also innovated and explored. From the perspective of structuralism, the large number of figurative equipment such as cameras and cameras in the whole film means the documentary exploration of film symbols in the whole film. Technology is an effective support for the plot. In the whole film, from the perspective of photography and lighting, the grand views shot by various aerial shots are more like "black and white paintings". On one side of Suzhou River is the roaring "hell" of artillery fire, and on the other side is the "paradise" of wine and wine. The officials and dignitaries in the prosperous city over there witnessed the eight hundred strong men who would rather die than surrender but still wanted to be peaceful, and we here were not the director to join them and become "officials and dignitaries". The visual impact of this view across the shore is more shocking and easier for the audience to have an empathic effect.

### **3. Three, the interpenetration of imagery symbols**

In the film "Eight Hundred" an obvious bright spot, the image of animals for the whole film's artistic conception added a lot of color. "Eight Hundred" the first shot is the mouse, the last scene is the white horse, the mouse means dark,

escape, the white horse symbolizes unyielding, hope, the front carefully probes the mouse finally turned into a white horse galloping the battlefield. At the beginning of the film, the deserters are in hiding, and the peasants and defenseless accountants are clinging to their lives in the Sixing warehouse. The peacock across the Suzhou River is so noble, holy, but it is so ironic. The appearance of the white horse was a stroke of genius, as was the encounter with the white horse on the Dragon Boat Festival, so white and clean in the smoke and gunfire of the battlefield. The White Horse runs like a wind through the ruins of concessions and battlefields. It always surrounds Little July and Little Hubei, two children who are the future and hope of the country. Little July and little Hubei look outside the white horse miraculously alive, just like the Chinese nation miraculously defeated the fascist.

In the movie "Eight Hundred," the climax is soldiers fighting to protect the flag. Raising the flag in the heat of battle does not help the situation. Because, in the eyes of the Japanese, the original battle hidden in the warehouse, they are just some defeated in the corner of the Anti-Japanese War, and raising the flag means that they are the regular army, which is undoubtedly a thrill to the Japanese, and even a shame, raising the flag will only let the enemy increase the attack on the warehouse on the fourth front. But Colonel Xie said the flag was raised to stir up enthusiasm among Chinese living in the concession across the Suzhou River. In the movie, the national flag symbolizes the victory of China's war of resistance, which makes people on the other side feel awed. Outside of the movie, the flag is also the representative of a country, in this case it is a symbol. Watching the clip, many viewers got excited as if they were in it, hoping the flag wouldn't come down. The film also has another memorable scene: Chen Shusheng jumps from a building. This scene has an archetype in history and we can think of it as a symbol, however, the spirit it conveys makes it more appropriate to call it a symbol. On the night of Oct. 26, Mr. Xie asked the soldiers what message they wanted to leave for their families. "Sacrifice your life for justice, as your son wishes," Mr. Chen wrote in his own blood on his underwear. Two days later, the fighting stopped. Backed by tanks, the Japanese organized a team to dig into the walls of the four-line warehouse and tried to bring it down by burying explosives. Seeing that the Japanese were about to succeed, Chen Shusheng, as a member of the death squad, strapped four or five grenades to his body and shouted: "To my mother!" He then pulled the wire and jumped, sacrificing himself but also opening a gash and knocking the Japanese back. Chen's passionate defense and determination brought tears to Xie's eyes, and several of his comrades were martyred in the same way. How many people were moved by this scene. The soldiers are a symbol at this moment, showing the fearless spirit of the anti-Japanese soldiers to the symbol docents.

With patriotism as the core, Babai does not excessively present the political color of war history film and adopts the operation mode of commercial blockbuster. Under the careful production of the shooting team, multiple metaphorical images are used to convey national feelings and patriotism. It condenses the deep interest appeal of class groups and the emotional resonance between consumers. Perhaps this film is not perfect, but it has a bold attempt to Chinese war films, provides a reference for Chinese war films, and helps Chinese war films to better break out of the country to the world.

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