



A Study of the Aesthetic Implications of Chinese Literati Cinema in the Perspective of Traditional History and Culture

Yi fei Niu*

¹ School of humanities, Jilin University.

* **Corresponding Author:** 15738407789@163.com

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ABSTRACT

A Chinese literati movie is a kind of literati creative expression movie that expresses special ideological concepts, contains profound humanistic concern and cultural connotation, and is of great significance to enhance the audience's aesthetic taste, therefore, the aesthetic implication of Chinese literati movie under the perspective of traditional history and culture is studied. That is to say, we clarify the background of the development of conventional history and culture vision and the characteristics of Chinese literati films, analyze the current situation of the development of Chinese literati films, judge the relationship between traditional history and culture and Chinese literati films, and then we elaborate the aesthetics implication of Chinese literati films under the vision of conventional history and culture in the following aspects: humanistic care and illumination of human nature, creative expression and aesthetic pursuits, creation of mood and philosophical thinking, small narratives and space and time, and the spirit of literati paintings and video expressions.

Keywords: Traditional historical and cultural endeavors; Chinese literati; Cinema; Aesthetics; Implication

INTRODUCTION

As the name suggests, literati cinema refers to a form of cinema that is created by literati and has the characteristics and aesthetic interests of literati culture. This concept does not come out of nowhere^[1-3] but is rooted in the historical soil of China's movie development. As early as in the 1930s, with the rise of the new literary movement and the introduction of the art of film, a group of literary workers began to intervene in the creation of films, and their works, with profound ideological connotations, unique artistic style, and strong humanistic concern, gradually formed the

prototype of literati films. Since then, although literati films have been in a marginal position in the mainstream movie market^[4-6], their unique artistic charm and aesthetic pursuit have never disappeared, but have been continuously developed and perfected with the changes of the times.

The reason why Chinese literati movies have unique aesthetic connotations cannot be separated from the deep nourishment of traditional Chinese history and culture. In terms of cultural origin, literati movies are inextricably linked with classical Chinese literature, painting, and philosophical thinking. First of all, the "Poetry and Sao tradition" of classical Chinese literature provides a rich foundation for the expression of emotions and aesthetic pursuit for literati movies. This tradition focuses on the expression of subjective emotions and expressiveness^[7-10]

and emphasizes the use of poetry and other forms of art to convey the inner world and philosophies of the literati. In the process of creation, literati films were deeply influenced by this tradition, emphasizing the complexity and diversity of human nature through delicate depiction

and profound thinking. Secondly, literati painting not only pursues the artistic effect of expressing emotions and conveying the spirit but also emphasizes the mood and vividness of the picture. These characteristics are fully reflected in literati films, which make the visual presentation of the film more poetic and beautiful. In addition, as the philosophical foundation of literati films, Zhuang Zen thought also has a profound influence on its aesthetic meaning. Zhuang Zen thought emphasizes the harmony and unity of man and nature, the spiritual state of forgetting the world, and the aesthetic pursuit of transcending the world^[11-13]. These ideas have been embodied in literati films, making them more philosophical and profound in expression. The aesthetic connotation of literati films is reflected in many aspects, including humanistic concern, lyrical expression, the aesthetic character of lightness and flavor, and a unique image representation system. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the aesthetic

connotation of Chinese literati films from the perspective of traditional history and culture, with a view to providing new dimensions and perspectives for the study of Chinese film history.

1 THE CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADITIONAL HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL HORIZONS

The development process of traditional historical and cultural horizons is complex and far-reaching, involving a variety of factors and having a certain relationship with the change of dynasties. As one of the four ancient civilizations in the world, the origin of China's civilization can be traced back to ancient times. With the evolution of history, from the Xia, Shang, and Western Zhou to the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, Chinese characters with pictograms and ideograms began to be formed, the thought systems of Confucianism, Taoism, and Dharma were initially constructed, and social systems such as ethical and patriarchal systems were established gradually, and the cornerstone of the Chinese civilization was laid initially in this period, and the cultural contents involved in the different periods are shown in Table 1 below

As can be seen from Table 1, due to the continuous deepening of historical research and the emergence of new discoveries, the contents of each period may be more extensive, including economic culture and political culture. During the Qin and Han Dynasties, the Qin Dynasty

integrated the economic and political order through the unification of weights and measures, car tracks, and writing; the Han Dynasty honored Confucianism and made Confucianism the official ruling ideology, which set the tone for the cultural development of the later generations. From the Wei, Jin, North, and South Dynasties to the middle of the Tang Dynasty, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Xuanism merged with each other during this period^[14], forming a diversified cultural pattern. Various cultural ideas collided, exchanged, and fused with each other, greatly enriching the connotation of Chinese culture. From the middle of the Tang Dynasty to the middle of the Ming Dynasty, Chinese culture gradually emerged from the framework of the Middle Ages and incorporated some elements of modern culture, showing a new direction of development. The development of literature and art promoted cultural exchanges and dissemination, enabling traditional Chinese culture to be inherited and developed on a wider scale. The social system of Chinese history has undergone many changes, from the patriarchal system to the feudal system to the modern democratic republican system, which has profoundly influenced the direction of cultural development.

2 CHARACTERISTICS OF CHINESE LITERATI CINEMA

Chinese literati movie is a distinctive type of movie creation with the outstanding artistic appeal, including classics such as "Border Town" and "Old Things in the South of the City", as shown in Figure 1 below.

As can be seen from Figure 1, Border Town is adapted from Shen Congwen's novel of the same name and makes extensive use of fixed-camera photography and long shots to show the poetry and beauty of the border town in western Hunan, reflecting the literati movie's in-depth excavation and inheritance of traditional culture. Adapted from Lin Haiyin's novel of the same name and directed by Wu Yigong, Old Story of Chengnan has become one of the masterpieces of Chinese literati cinema with its delicate prose texture and extremely beautiful images. From this, we can analyze the characteristics of Chinese literati films: firstly, they reveal the complexity and diversity of human nature through delicate depictions, giving the audience profound thoughts and emotional experiences; secondly, they explore the ups and downs of characters' destinies, focusing on the individual's choices and struggles in the torrent of history. Through the in-depth analysis of the fate of the characters, it triggers the audience to think about the meaning of life, the pursuit of values, and other deep-seated issues; third, it creates a unique atmosphere and mood, so that the audience can get a emotional resonance and comfort in the process of watching the movie; fourth, it focuses on the artistry of the picture, music, performance, etc., and enhances the audience's aesthetic level through the exquisite production; and fifth, it adopts the form of loose culture structure^[15], through the splicing of multiple fragments or scenes to show the life and emotional state of the characters; sixthly, it emphasizes on the excavation and inheritance of traditional culture, letting more people understand and know the Chinese culture through video; seventhly, it provokes the audience to think about and reflect on the real world through the critique of the social phenomena and problems.

3 THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE LITERATI CINEMA

In recent years, with the continuous expansion of the Chinese film market and the increasing diversification of the audience's aesthetic needs, the number of literati films has increased significantly. More and more directors and screenwriters have turned their eyes to this field, presenting a series of excellent works to the audience through exquisite brushwork and profound connotations. These works have not only made great achievements at the box office but also won wide praise for their artistry and ideological depth. The representative works in different periods are shown in Table 2 below.

As can be seen from Table 2, the themes and styles of Chinese literati films have become increasingly diversified, no longer limited to traditional small-town stories and family ethics, but expanding into broader social areas. By digging deep into history, culture, and society, some works show the complexity and truth of human nature and arouse the audience's deep thinking. At the same time, literati movies have become more diversified in terms of style, combining realism, romanticism, magic realism, and other styles, making them more diverse. With the continuous progress of science and technology, the technical level of China's movie industry is also improving. In the process of creation, literati movies actively utilize advanced special effects technology and high-quality production methods, successfully presenting wonderful stories and profound connotations to the audience. This

fusion of technology and art not only enhances the visual effect and viewability of the works but also strengthens the artistic influence and expressive power of the works.

Although Chinese literati films have made remarkable achievements, they still face some challenges. On the one hand, the tendency of commercialization may lead to the assimilation of the creation of literati films, which lack unique artistic value; On the other hand, the impact of

foreign high-quality literary and artistic films also makes the market competition more intense. However, with the continuous expansion of the Chinese film market and the increasing diversification of the audience's aesthetic needs, literati films also ushered in more development opportunities. Through continuous innovation and improving the quality of work, Chinese literati films are expected to achieve more brilliant development achievements in the future.

4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADITIONAL HISTORICAL CULTURE AND CHINESE LITERATI CINEMA

There exists a profound and close relationship between traditional historical culture and Chinese literati movies. This relationship is not only reflected in the literati movie's drawing and inheriting of traditional culture but also in its modern interpretation and innovative expression of traditional culture, as shown in Figure 2 below

As can be seen from Figure 2, as an important type of movie art, literati movies play an irreplaceable role in passing on and promoting traditional culture. Through the wide dissemination of influence, literati films are able to transmit the values, moral concepts, and aesthetic pursuits of traditional culture to a wider group of viewers, enhance the viewers' sense of identity and sense of belonging to traditional culture, and promote the modernization and transformation of traditional culture.

While inheriting traditional culture, literati movies also pay attention to its modern interpretation and innovative expression. Breaking the constraints of the conventional narrative mode, they adopt more flexible and diversified narrative techniques and structural forms to make the stories more attractive and infectious. When shaping the characters, literati movies focus on exploring the complexity and diversity of the characters' hearts, to make the characters more three-dimensional and vivid. This kind of characterization not only helps the audience to better understand the character and destiny but also helps to convey the deeper meaning of traditional culture. Literati films pay attention to innovation and breakthroughs in audiovisual language, using advanced special effects technology and high-quality production methods to make the visual and

auditory effects of the film are more shocking, improve the artistic quality of the film, and enhance the audience's sense of identification with traditional culture.

5 AESTHETIC IMPLICATIONS OF CHINESE LITERATI CINEMA IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF TRADITIONAL CULTURE

5.1 Humanistic care and human illumination

Chinese literati movies are deeply influenced by the idea of "love and benevolence" in traditional culture and show strong humanistic concern. This concern is not only reflected in the concern for the fate of individuals but also the deep insight into human nature, society, nature, and other areas. Characters in the movie are often placed in complex social environments, and through the ups and downs of their destinies and emotional entanglements, they show the glory and darkness of human nature, goodness, and ugliness. This kind of humanistic concern makes literati movies pay more attention to the inner world of the characters in their narratives. Literati movies have a penetrating illumination of human nature, which is not only a simple depiction of

human nature but also a deeper excavation and analysis of human nature. Characters in the movie are often multi-faceted, with both good and honest sides, as well as selfish and cowardly sides. This complexity makes the characters more three-dimensional and real and also allows the audience to understand the complexity and diversity of human nature in the process of watching the movie. Through the multi-dimensional display of human nature, literati films not only let the audience see the beauty of human nature but also let them realize the weakness of human nature, thus prompting the audience to self-reflection and growth.

5.2 Written lyricism and aesthetic pursuit

Chinese literati films are deeply influenced by classical poems and paintings and have formed a unique aesthetic tendency to write and express emotions. The images, music, dialogues, and other elements in the film are full of poetry and beauty, creating a uniquely aesthetic atmosphere through poetic and subtle expressions. This aesthetic tendency not only enhances the artistic quality of the movie but also gives the audience an aesthetic experience beyond reality. The artistic expression in literati movies is not only reflected in the depiction of natural scenery but also in the expression of characters' emotions. Through delicate emotional depiction and poetic expression, the movie can deeply touch the audience's heart. Literati movies pursue the aesthetic character of subtlety and subtlety and do not express emotions and thoughts directly or ostentatiously. The emotions in the film are often conveyed through details, symbols, metaphors, and other means, allowing the audience to gradually realize their deeper meanings in the process of tasting and figuring out. This kind of implicit expression not only increases the artistic charm of the movie but also gives the audience more space for thinking and imagining in the process of watching the movie. The aesthetic character of literati movies is not only embodied in the pursuit of beauty but also in the criticism and reflection of negative elements such as ugliness and evil. Through praising beauty and criticizing ugliness, they show a positive attitude and value of

life.

5.3 Mood creation and philosophical reflection

Chinese literati movies pay great attention to the creation of mood, through the clever combination of images, music, dialogues, and other elements, to create a transcendent reality, full of poetic mood. This kind of mood not only allows the audience to enjoy the beauty in the process of watching the movie, but also allows them to have a deeper understanding of life, nature, and the universe. The creation of mood in literati movies is often in line with the traditional culture of Taoism and Zen thinking, pursuing a spiritual realm of transcendence and return to nature. Through the creation of mood, literati movies let the audience experience a kind of spiritual purification and sublimation in the process of watching movies. Literati movies also incorporate profound philosophical thinking while showing all kinds of life situations. The storyline, characters, and dialogues in the film are all rich in philosophical meaning. Through the discussion of life, existence, value, and other issues, literati movies lead the audience to deep philosophical thinking. This kind of philosophical thinking not only enhances the depth of thought and cultural connotation of the movie but also allows the audience to gain more enlightenment and understanding in the process of watching the movie. Philosophical thinking in literati films is often intertwined with the ideas of Confucianism, Taoism, and Zen Buddhism in traditional culture, forming a unique cultural landscape.

5.4 Mini-narratives and transcendence

Chinese literati films often adopt a small narrative approach, through the telling of one or several small stories to show the glory of human nature and social changes. This kind of small narrative not only makes the movie more compact and concise but also makes it easier for the audience to understand and accept. The storylines in small narratives are often universal and representative, which can trigger the audience's empathy and thinking. At the same time, small narratives also make it easier for the director to explore the complexity and diversity of human nature within a limited space. Literati movies often break the limitations of time and space in their narratives, adopting the narrative technique of hyperspace and time, which not only increases the narrative tension and viewability of the movie but also gives the audience more space for imagination in the process of watching the movie. The narrative technique of transcendence of time and space is often compatible with the idea of "unity of heaven and mankind" in traditional culture, which pursues a spiritual realm of transcending reality and returning to nature. Through the transcendence and integration of time and space, the literati movie allows the audience to experience a spiritual journey beyond reality in the process of watching the movie.

5.5 The spirit of literati painting and video expression

Chinese literati films are deeply influenced by the spirit of literati paintings and have borrowed the artistic techniques of literati paintings, such as writing, expressing emotions, and conveying the spirit. The images in the films often have the flavor and temperament of literati paintings, expressing emotions and moods through concise lines and light colors. At the same time, literati films also pay attention to the white space and the combination of reality and emptiness, creating an ethereal and profound mood through the use of blank space. This kind of borrowing not only improves the artistic quality of the movie but also makes the audience feel the unique charm of literati paintings in the process of watching the movie. In terms of image expression, the film is unique, creating a unique visual effect through the use of scattered perspective, composition depth of field, and long shots. The use of scattering perspective gives the film a broad vision and a sense of far-reaching space; the skillful combination of composition and depth of field gives the picture a sense of hierarchy and three-dimensionality; and the use of long shots makes the storyline of the film more coherent and fluent. These unique image expression techniques not only enhance the visual effect and viewability of the movie but also give the audience more aesthetic enjoyment in the process of watching the movie.

6 CONCLUSION

Chinese literati movie is a kind of movie form with unique aesthetic connotations and cultural characteristics, which are deeply influenced by Chinese literati culture and traditional art, showing deep cultural heritage and humanistic concern. The emergence of literati films has gradually gained attention and popularity because they satisfy the audience's pursuit of culture, art, and thought. Literati films are of great significance to the excavation and inheritance of traditional culture by letting more people understand and know Chinese culture through images. In the long history of Chinese cinema, literati films have become a unique landscape with their unique artistic style, carrying rich historical and cultural connotations. As an important part of Chinese cinema, literati cinema not only enriches the artistic form and expression methods of Chinese cinema but also provides useful reference and inspiration for the development of Chinese cinema's nationalization. Combining the development background and problems, this paper analyzes the aesthetic meaning of Chinese literati films from historical and cultural perspectives and contributes to the development of Chinese traditional culture and the field of cinema.