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Research on Basic Mode of American Sports Film Production

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Abstract: Sports feature films with great influencing power in recent years are regarded as research objects. Based on more than 100 sports films, 8 representative sports films are taken as individual research samples. A macro analytical framework is provided on the basic model of sports film production. All elements are unfolded around sports story, which is also the important characteristic in the typed development for sports films. Unique film aesthetical appreciations are reflected in production links of sports films such as: story design concept, creation material source, natural performers, story climax, expression scope of education content, opening and tail leader design and poster design. Since 1980s, transforming from life demonstration to motivational spirit, sports films change the production mode along with the era constantly. The establishment of new mode has provided constructive platform for all cultural output. Film products with different forms and similar contents come out in succession, which reflects the recurrence of global sports world. The progresses in the following aspects shall be paid attention to in future research: further exploring common rule and expression technique of sports film production by new research method; explaining from new research angle; emphasizing the case study analysis on sports films; accelerating the process for China to realize rules of sports films; communicating with the same trade in the world; carrying out transnational cooperation.

Keywords: Sports Information; Sports Film; Basic Mode

1. Introduction

Hailed as The Seventh Art, film explains development process of human culture by its unique glamour. As the existence means of human beings, sports, with wonderful aesthetical appreciation, are full of vigorous vitality and artistic imagination. Combining film art with sports world inevitably has objective necessity in history, science and art. Sports shall be recorded and presented by film art, and film shall regard sports as the theme and foundation for development. In this way, film art and sports will keep pace with each other.

2. Research Object and Method

2.1. Research Object

Sports feature films with great influencing power in recent years are regarded as research objects. Based on more than 100 sports films, 8 representative sports films are taken as individual research samples (refer to Table 1 and Table 2). Sample structure has the following characteristics: representative films are selected based on sports types. Visual thresholds are compared among sports

films of various countries. National ideology, professionalism of sports video, and mass influencing power are regarded as selection evidence. According to another recognition dimension, research objects are divided into core research objects and auxiliary research objects. Core research objects are Hollywood sports films of the United States, and auxiliary research objects are sports films from other countries and nationalities.

2.2. Research Method

Sports films with great influencing power in recent years are selected as research samples. Based on detailed analysis and explanation (case study method), styles, characteristics, and rules of various sports films are compared. Common rule of sports films are realized and presented by promoting the result of case study to pervasive value. According to analysis on the structural characteristics of story content in time quantum of film, the rule of time for story setting is concluded. Furthermore, the characteristics of sports films are abstracted based on narrative clue of sports films.

Table 1. Research Sample Basic Information of Sports Films

Film Name (translation name)	Project	Director	Issuer	Country	Year
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Coach Carter	Basketball	Thomas Carter	Paramount	America	2005
Goal	Football	Danny Cannon	Buena Vista of Disney	America	2005
Honey	Hip-hop	Bille Woodruff	Century Universal	America	2003
Million Dollar Baby	Boxing	Clint Eastwood	Warner	America	2004
Peaceful Warrior	Gymnastics	Victor Salva	DEJ Productions	German	2006
バッテリー Batteri	Baseball	Yojiro Takita	Toho Company	Japan	2007
Innocent Steps	Dance	Young-hoon Park	Show East	Korea	2005
Kung Fu Dunk	Basketball	Zhu Yanping	EEG	Hong Kong	2008

Table 2. Research Sample Selection Evidence of Sports Films (Awards, Box Office, Social Influencing Power)

Film Name	Selection Evidence
Coach Carter	Model of American motivational sports films, Top-grossing movie in North America of Current Week with box office of USD23.6 million
Goal	Sponsored by FIFA; total investment of nearly USD100 million; first football trilogy in film history
Honey	Model of American motivational sports films; income of about USD30 million.
Million Dollar Baby	Four prizes including best film, best director, best actress, and best supporting actor in the 77 th Oscar
Peaceful Warrior	Globalized Germany sports film
Batteri	Globalized Japanese sports film
Innocent Steps	Globalized Korean sports film
Kung Fu Dunk	Globalized Hong Kong (China) sports film

Table 3. Analysis on Story Climax of Sports Films

Film Name	Scene Description	Time Slot A	Time Slot B	Time Slot C	Shooting Technique
Goal	Loss time in the second half contest. At 2:2 in the field, Newcastle achieved an opportunity for free kick. Sandiogo took the kick.	Time slot 105:00-105:27 of induction stage for key free kick Time: 27 seconds	Describe mental change and free kick instant of Sandiogo: 105:28-105:56 Time: 28 seconds	Describe change in the contest field (105:57-106:43) Time: 46 seconds	Close-up shot (person, Sandiogo)
Coach Carter	Final period in the contest with Saint Francis (6 seconds before the termination) at 67:68 in the field, Richmond took the lead. Saint achieved ball right and had a final throw.	Brew the final attack: 125:51-126:14 Time: 23 seconds	Describe the final attack in the contest, flying track and field change in the final throw of the opponent: 126:15-126:28 Time: 23 seconds	Describe the change in the contest field (126:29 – 127: 44) Time: 75 seconds	Blank shot (article, basketball)
Honey	Final part of charitable performance (final 4 8-pat movement arrangement)	Brew the final part of charitable performance: 86:54-87:06 Time: 12 seconds	Describe the final modeling of self-made hip-hop performance: 87:07-87:11 Time: 4 seconds	Describe the change in contest field: 87:12-88:30 Time: 78 seconds	Long shot (people, hip-hop team)

Table 4. Analysis on Dialogue about Life Development in Film Coach Carter

Scene	Cause Event	Dialogue	Educational Meaning
A	Richmond achieved the first success. The whole team was proud and flighty. Therefore, they provoked and shamed the opponent.	Coach: you began to shame the opponent. You mocked at them every time when you won the score. You just won 4 contests in the last season. 4 contest! Why can you stain my favorite contests with dirty words and provocation?	We shall respect the opponent, the weakness, and every one. Sometimes, you mock at yourself when you mock at others.
B	Players repelled Coach Carter. A player called him as the nigger.	Coach: From now on, you are a Mr. All of you belong to Mr. Mr. is respectful. If you do not abuse my respect, I will respect you.	People shall get along well with others based on mutual understanding, communication and respect.
C	The player, Cruze, regarded himself as a star in the training. He was punished to have an additional training. So he left the training field.	Coach: Young people, if you want to go out of the door, please have a consideration of your selection.	Energetic young people will easily get impetuous and emotional. So they shall look before they leap for everything.

3. Characteristics of Story Climax in Sports Films

Story climax is the link rendered excessively in the whole film, around which all preludes are unfolded. Sports films choose climax based on the rule of sports. For example, the climax of Goal has climax in the most exciting instant of goal in football activity (zero hour; making

vigorous efforts to turn the situation; remarkably original and forceful); Coach Carter has climax in the most attractive termination period of basketball activity (final time, final throw); Honey has climax in the most creative modeling for curtain call in hip-hop activity (one minute on the stage needs ten years of practice off the stage)^[1]. The climax scene is consisted of induction period, rendering period, and maintenance period (Refer to Table 4). According to analysis on induction period of Time Slot A,

the acquisition process of terminal period in film is described in the time slot. Rendering period of Time Slot B, as the center of film climax, splendidly expounds the short instant of movement in reality with abundant contents. Maintenance period of Time Slot C mainly describes the change in atmosphere after the climax, and continues audiences' satisfaction in mind after the exciting film scene during the climax.

The establishment of climax scene widely applies Montage technology. The basic objective and task of Montage is to explain the theme, plot, movement, and behavior in order smoothly, and connect them in the whole film. Montage, mainly applying in the induction period and maintenance period, has presented the greatest artistic modeling in induction period and maintenance period, and better brewed and maintained shocking film effect in rendering period^[2]. In order to compact the story and extrude the focus, details in specific stage of activity shall be selected. Through selection and combination of Montage, important details are selected to present strong artistic infection. Montage is the selective channel to realize film art, and also the necessary channel selection. Rendering period of climax scene promotes the whole film to the climax by means of various film technology and expression techniques. For example, in mental close-up shot of the instant that Sandiago completed the penalty kick, during the 28 seconds, slow motion technology is applied to describe the mental transformation process that Sandiago kissed the necklace and had a deep breathing. Audiences completed the release of impulse from the experience of mental climax along with the description of completed penalty kick. The rendering period in Coach Carter is the representative of plot-based close-up technology. Through description on flying track of basketball in the air, slow motion is transferred among the basketball, second team member of Richmond, Coach Carter, and audiences, showing the glamour of Montage in building climax scene. Long shot technology is applied

in Honey. As arrangement of modeling for curtain call emphasizes the overall stage effect, so it is difficult to satisfy the description demand by means of close-up shot or slow motion^[3]. As a result, macroscopic scene is reflected by means of long shot technology to fully release the glamour of hip-hop activity. It can be seen from that corresponding film technology and expression technique are selected according to aesthetic characteristics and expression rule of different sports in rendering period as the theoretical evidence for corresponding adjustment on film technology.

4. Opening and Tail Leader Design

According to analysis on openings and tail leaders in sports films (refer to Table 4): it is difficult to judge the division point, which reflects that the connection between the title and the film is strong. With few subtitles, the opening only presents the producer, film name, and protagonists. Tail leader is completed with pure subtitles, with MTV or film sidelights (Honey). Opening and tail leader has similar length, which does not change with total time of film. For example, film length of Coach Carter is nearly 43 minutes longer than Honey (time ratio of 6.26% and 8.86%). However, openings and tail leaders in both films have similar length (8:32 and 8:19). It is suggested that opening and tail leader design has fixed mode, while with different expression technique. Besides, it is common to switch into the theme in the title design of sports films. As a result, the films often begin with fierce sports contest performance. For example, Million Dollar Baby has a very creative opening. Within only 40 seconds, after demonstration of main information including producer and film name, the opening switches to the theme started by a male boxing match. Batteri of Japan also applies the opening design, switching to the theme only based on film title.

Table 5. Beginnings, Endings Analysis of Sports Film

Title	Two Types Classification	Total Time	Beginnings	Endings	Ratio in Total Film
Coach Carter	Sports and Inspiration	136:17	About 4:00	4:35	6.26 %
My Player	Sports and Inspiration	113:10	About 4:50	4:50	8.51%
Honey	Sports and Life	93:54	About 3:30	4:47	8.86%
Million Dollar Baby	Sports and Inspiration	132:30	About 0:40	4:24	3.82%
Peaceful Warrior	Sports and Inspiration	120:50	About 2:00	6:30	7.03%
Batteri	Sports and Life	119:23	About 0:45	4:28	4.37%
Innocent Steps	Sports and Love	110:15	About 3:55	2:00	5.37%
Kungfu Dunk	Sports and fantasy	95:30	About 1:50	2:15	4.28%

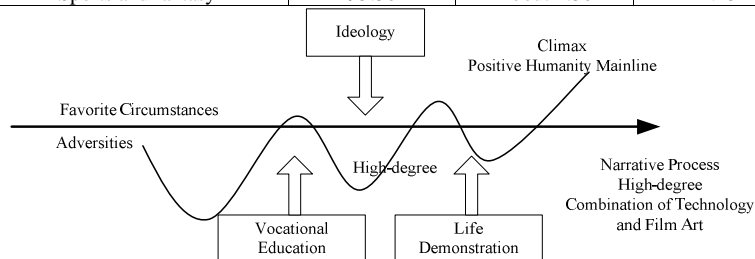


Figure 1. Integrated Design Method of Chinese Sports Media Service System

5. Basic Mode of Sports Films Production

Basic mode of sports films production can be abstracted from the above analysis (Figure 1). The sports film is realized as the process of sports story that reproduces daily life and excesses daily life. With the mainline of positive humanistic spirit, story design is unfolded in the mutual transformation between favorable circumstances and adversities in life. The film is consisted of ideology, vocation education, and life demonstration. Ideology, which plays a deceive role, is implicated in the whole story through soft expression technique^[4]. Due to high combination of technology and film art, the shocking effect of the film tends to be perfect.

By creating words and videos of protagonist in film and rendering the existence value and cultural expansion meaning of sports, the real development status of sports in American society is completed. Value description is made by moving life of common people through vivid film language. For example, there is a dialogue in the *Goal*: I have deep love for football. I play football after school every day or after religious service every Sunday. I will football will be a part of my life one day.^[5] Films with different themes have different requirements on performers' birth background, living environment, temperament, figure, and acting skill. Performers of sports films undoubtedly have their special characteristics^[6]. Film performers are generally divided into professional performers, natural performers, substitutes, and figurants. Natural performers are the important issue in the film art, which is also the symbol that sports films can be the unique film type. Natural performers play their roles according to their shape and personal characteristics, or only play the roles similar to their shape and personal characteristics. In different films, film figures are similar to the performers in nature. They are close to life, natural, and real. As a result, they can be accepted by audiences and accordance with the characteristics of the film. However, natural performers can only demonstrate single film figures, while cannot create different characters by acting skills. The natural performers in sports films undoubtedly shall have more sports skill and temperament in their performance project, and demonstrate the skill and temperament through different performance forms^[7].

The expression scope of education in patriotism: it can be said that the spiritual education scope transferred by Hollywood sports films belongs to construction scope of national ideology or patriotism. The style maintenance of Hollywood sports film and macro allocation is abstracted as a unique national view, presenting great publicity of American Spirit, such as adventure, exploration, personality, self-challenge, and American-style democratic spirit. Great efforts are also made in constructing national ideology through Chinese sports films. Sincere patriotism has been transferred in films including *Women Basket-*

ball No. 5, *Football No. 9* (initial foundation period), *Shining Feather*, *One Man Olympics*.

Educational content in sports films close to sports practice has the following characteristics: authenticity, soft explanation, level-by-level promotion, and distinctive. Educational scene in film consisted of video and film language facilitates the artistic form to demonstrate the educational value towards society. American sports films based on young people's culture, have educational value focusing on youngsters, which is completed through traditional western practice education form. Practice education, generated from ancient Greek, has advocated indoctrinating thinking through social practice. In *Utopia*, Plato suggested to achieve the original intention of education by means of festivals, gymnastics, singing and entertainment. The educational process based on experience has greater education efficiency. Western society broke through the haze of Middle Ages Period, and the Renaissance transferred the essence of educational thinking in ancient Greek. Rousseau gave out a cry enlightening the benighted: "All teachers, you must say little and do more. You shall be good at choosing location, time and figure to teach your student by practice. Then you will achieve practical effect." Sports films, with gentile and concise artistic language as well as vivid and real life video, teach unleash youngsters, who have increasingly greater personality. Compared with exam-oriented education consisted of moral teaching and mechanical memorizing of knowledge in Chinese educational system, western world has applied a better method.

6. Conclusion

Sports feature films with great influencing power in recent years are regarded as research objects. Based on more than 100 sports films, 8 representative sports films are taken as individual research samples. A macro analytical framework is provided on the basic model of sports film production. All elements are unfolded around sports story, which is also the important characteristic in the typed development for sports films. Unique film aesthetic appreciate are reflected in production links of sports films such as: story design concept, creation material source, natural performers, story climax, expression scope of education content, opening and tail leader design and poster design. Since 1980s, transforming from life demonstration to motivational spirit, sports films change the production mode along with the era constantly. The establishment of new mode has provided constructive platform for all cultural output. Film products with different forms and similar contents come out in succession, which reflects the recurrence of global sports world. The progresses in the following aspects shall be paid attention to in future research: further exploring common rule and expression technique of sports film production by new research method; explaining from new research angle; emphasizing the case study analysis

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