

Foreign Communication of Ethnic Minority Films in the Perspective of Chinese Modernization

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Abstract. Ethnic minority films play an important strategic role in foreign communication. From the internal perspective of landscape construction in Chinese minority films, this paper examines the practice of self-expression of such films in terms of natural and humanistic landscapes in the past. From the external perspective of "other" thinking, this paper examines the lack of self-image in the past minority films. In the face of such a lack of position, this paper considers the path of discourse breakthrough in the light of Chinese modernization, which is the latest achievement of the Communist Party of China (CPC)'s century-long modernization ideological development, and argues that in order to further "go to the sea", ethnic minority films need to be "firm and self-centered, and at the same time embrace the whole world", It is believed that in order to further "go overseas", ethnic minority films need to "firmly focus on themselves and have a heart for the whole world", and "go deep into the culture and express their national characteristics".

1 Introduction

As the economic activities and cultural production of global capitalism are no longer tightly bound within the boundaries of nation-states, "good Chinese stories" are being crafted in the global marketplace.[1] Rao Shuguang, president of the China Film Critics Society, has pointed out, "In the historical context of marketization and internationalization, ethnic-themed films have the potential to act as leaders and play a positive role in the foreign communication strategy of Chinese films." [2] Ethnic minority film and television works are not only conventional market consumer goods, but also carry multiple missions of foreign export, and are important carriers to manifest the national image, national spirit, and China's excellent traditional culture.

The theoretical system of Chinese-style modernization is the latest achievement of the Communist Party of China (CPC) after a century of independent exploration, which provides valuable theoretical resources for us to examine the future development of ethnic minority films. Examining the communication development of minority films from the perspective of Chinese modernization is more in line with the characteristics of the times and the national conditions of China, and it has a deeper guiding significance on how minority films can be more effectively communicated to the outside world.

Therefore, this paper draws forward momentum from the past minority films, examines the construction of landscape in the images, reflects on the defects, and further clarifies the direction of future struggle by

combining the theoretical resources of Chinese-style modernization. Chinese minority films are not going to follow the Western road or the old traditional road, but to follow the past and take the road of Chinese-style modernization and development.

2 Landscape Construction: Triple Self-Representation Practices of Ethnic Minority Images

2.1 Nature: a "heterotopian" pristine paradise

In China, "rural" can signal backwardness, poverty, remoteness, and inferiority or, alternatively, a kind of utopia or idyll - an escape from urban pressures. However, the majority of ethnic minorities have a predominantly rural form of development due to geographical constraints.[3] For a long time, most of the ethnic minority areas, due to their relatively closed geographical location, have been less exposed to modern civilization and foreign cultures, and have retained more of their original features. In movie and television art, ethnic minority villages have also formed a unique "heterotopia" picture, creating a "paradise on earth" like a pristine pure land. "Heterotopia" is a special space that is different from the conventional modern space full of pressure and desires, which is self-contained and ecologically favorable; the "pristine" pure land is a more initial, original and rustic place that is different from the modern elements such as commercialization, industrialization and marketization. The "original

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ecological" pure land is a more initial, original and simple place, different from the modernized elements of commercialization, industrialization and marketization. This kind of "heterotopia" and "original ecology" is not an absolute concept, but a relative and dynamic concept, which is relative to the modern city.

In ethnic minority films, a large number of "original" natural landscapes show an exotic garden that is different from the modern city and gives rise to infinite reverie. For example, the endless grassland and the magnificent scene of ten thousand horses galloping in "Hailindu" is refreshing; the Dali scenery in "Five Golden Flowers" attracts the audience with its exotic flavor; "Long Horn Miao Hanzi", "Dong Song", "Songs of the Moon", and other films focus the camera on the original ecological landscapes of the Qiandongnan region, with lush mountains, golden terraced fields, and villages full of fireworks. These unique regional landscapes outline a distinctive oriental picture, showing the beautiful scene of harmonious coexistence between man and nature.

This kind of "heterotopia"-style original ecological pure land of natural landscape presentation in minority films, with very regional characteristics, national characteristics of the symbolic coding shaped the audience's "national memory", for the film provides a "national memory" visual form. The movie provides the visual form of "national memory".

2.2 Human Landscape: A Mysterious Exhibition of Exoticism

In addition to original natural landscapes, ethnic minority areas have also preserved a large number of traditional customs, cultural characteristics, lifestyles, etc. These humanistic landscapes, which are different from the characteristics of modern cities, come from the long-term and deep historical and cultural precipitation of the area, adding to the exotic flavor of ethnic minority areas.

Some ethnic minority films contain a large number of traditional symbols representing their ethnic characteristics such as costumes, food and architecture, for example, the silver ornaments and Miao clothes in Sun on the Clouds, and other symbols unique to the Miao ethnicity; Mongolian yurts and hand-steamed meat in Grassland in the Sky. There are also some social folklore that can show the ethnic flavor that are important elements in the films. elements in the movie, such as the Dong songs in "Singing and Sitting on the Moon" and the horse races in "Five Golden Horses" etc..... In addition, some faith rituals also constitute unique humanistic landscapes in the ethnic minority movies, for example, the sacrificial activities in "A Wa Mountain" and the faith journey about Tibet in "Searching for Lomai", which have brought this heterogeneous space with a more mysterious atmosphere.

According to American scholar Paul Klaber, "the reason why ethnic minority films can become a highlight among many films is precisely because ethnic minority's national history, local conditions, life style and national character have the nature of 'otherness' compared with mainstream culture. " [5] These exotic humanistic

landscapes in ethnic minority films constitute "strange" camera expressions, creating a mysterious narrative atmosphere with unique cultural value and attraction, which also constitutes the selling point and attraction of the films.

2.3 Social Consciousness: History of Seal Engraving Regional Change and Development

ethnic minority films, like other mainstream films of the same period, assumed the political functions of disseminating political messages, propagating Socialism, and educating the masses.[4] Since the development of ethnic minority films, due to their special historical and cultural identities, they have taken on the important role of constructing the identity of the family and the country, which conventional films do not have, and therefore tend to exude a greater sense of social construction than conventional films.

On the one hand, some Chinese ethnic minority films have restored the revolutionary struggle and the construction of socialist undertakings in ethnic areas, for example, The Mysterious Traveling Companion and Treasure Beach are the same type of films that tell the story of ethnic minority areas fighting against the enemy, striving for liberation, and jointly constructing socialist undertakings, and such films often classify the people of all ethnic groups in China as one and the hostile elements as the opposing side, promoting the construction of ethnic integration in the dichotomy narrative. In the dichotomous narratives, they promote the construction of national integration, and such movies have played an important role in maintaining national unity and strengthening national identity.

In addition to showing the revolutionary struggle and socialist construction in ethnic minority areas, many ethnic minority films also show the regional construction and social change in ethnic minority areas since the founding of New China and even in the new century. For example, "The Drums of Taklamakan", "Water Phoenix", "Out of the Mountain" and other films have been engraved with distinctive marks of the times, showing the regional changes and development of ethnic minority areas and nationalities to varying degrees at that time, and although there are still natural and humanistic landscapes presented in these films, they more often incorporate a more macroscopic background of the times, and show the social landscapes of different historical periods from a regional perspective with characteristic images. In recent years, along with the changes in national policies, there has been an increase in the number of films that have been released.

In recent years, along with the changes in national policies and the needs of local social and economic development, the originally closed state of ethnic minority areas has been gradually broken, and traditional civilization and modern social development have been fiercely intertwined and collided, and some ethnic minority films have shown their thoughts on the relationship between tradition and modernity in such an era. On the one hand, the people of ethnic minority areas

want to maintain their original traditional culture, but on the other hand, they are also facing the inevitable trend of being swept into the process of modern civilization. For example, "Horses in the Monsoon" and "The Seventh Taste" show the conflict and contradiction between tradition and modern civilization, and complete the rational examination of the relationship between tradition and modernity in the films.

3 Looking back inward: reflecting on absence in the mindset of the Other

3.1 Human Landscape: A Mysterious Exhibition of Exoticism

The West has long maintained some kind of colonial dominance, and the accumulated psychological imprint has made some creators show a certain inferiority complex in the international arena. On the other hand, some of the national films under the "other" mindset have been caught up in the plot of self-objectification, showing the characteristics of post-colonial context. Some of the movies show more of the "ethnic minorities as Westerners want to see them". In terms of characterization and plotting, they focus on the West, taking the "other" as the core of the story and depreciating ethnic minorities. Chinese scholar Zhou Lei argues that Chinese filmmakers, when confronted with Western culture, show a particular fascination with "primitive plots," which she calls "primitive passion," and that they satisfy the Western audience's desire for voyeurism through the frequent display of primitive and disadvantaged imagery.[6] Films such as *Kiss in the Castle* and *Langmusi in the Clouds* have created a variety of "holy heterotopia" scenes, which are fascinating, but this kind of internalized Orientalist narrative also caters to the Western audience's desire to peep into this primitive landscape to a certain extent.

The expression of minority films on the international stage is also a process of self-identity construction, reflecting the creative body's cognition of its own national identity in the international landscape. The self-objectification of minority films in the face of strong Western culture will, to a certain extent, deepen the world's prejudice and misinterpretation of China, and further solidify the unequal discourse pattern between the East and the West.

3.2 Absence of Valuability: The Spectacular Presentation of Conspicuous Cultural Symbols

The unique cultural characteristics brought by exotic symbols can create differentiated features. However, a considerable number of contemporary films have fallen into the strange circle of using explicit cultural symbols as the narrative support, but the characters are set up in an old-fashioned way and the plot is templated and superficial. This kind of image is not a true reproduction of the life of ethnic minorities, but more of a deliberate attempt to boast cultural uniqueness and satisfy the

audience's visual sensory stimulation. For example, films such as *Sun on the Clouds* and *Love on the Corridor Bridge* resort a lot to the presentation of original ecological landscapes, but ignore story expression, and more or less have the problem of hard and clichéd characters and plots. In this case, the explicit cultural symbols are reduced to the products of consumption, and the lack of deeper meaning behind them makes some ethnic minority films reduced to the performance field of folk culture, resulting in ethnic minority films that are general but not precise.

The presentation of cultural symbols is not the same as the dissemination of culture, and the presentation of symbols that are detached from the background of the times and the narrative is only an empty exhibition; what is really lacking is the deep portrayal of hidden contents such as the national spirit and national culture. For example, some Guizhou ethnic minority movies show obvious symbols such as Miao costumes and footstools, which are widely known and have even become "characteristic oriental symbols" in the eyes of foreigners, but this does not mean that the audience really feels the spiritual outlook and cultural heritage of the Miao people behind the symbols. By emphasizing too much on the "ethnicity" of ethnic minority films and focusing only on the display of explicit symbols, the separation of images from the real space will inevitably hurt the feelings of ethnic minorities and affect the construction of ethnic minority viewers' identities, and at the same time, the display of a large number of novelty symbols will also become a metaphor for ethnic minorities to be surrounded by other people, such as Han Chinese or foreigners.

3.3 The Absence of Modernity: Non-Panoramic Speech under the Time-Space Rupture

If the early ethnic minority films played an important role in building national identity by showing the changes in regional development, today's ethnic minority films show more of an absence of modernity.

From a spatial point of view, some ethnic minority films show closed spaces and marginalized characters, which are relatively localized and one-sided, but are used to represent the whole of China and ethnic minority communities. From the perspective of time, the scenes shown in some ethnic minority films are even more lagging behind, deliberately downplaying the development achievements of ethnic minority regions after the 21st century, and choosing to show the backwardness of ethnic minorities. For example, the "three obediences and four virtues" and "male superiority and female inferiority" shown in *Snowflake Secret Fan* have long been diluted in modern society, and the deliberate emphasis on these backward cultures will give overseas viewers the misinterpretation that the Yao people in Hunan Province are still the same today. Some viewers even called the movie "a curious Western interpretation of Chinese culture".

In general, in order to emphasize their "ethnicity" and "primitiveness", some ethnic minority films have chosen

to hide modernity intentionally, presenting ethnic minority villages as closed-door and isolated. Even if some films involve reflections on modernity, they are more often expressed as questioning, resisting and rejecting modernity. As a matter of fact, the cultural characteristics of ethnic minorities are only the products of a specific history and society, and their cultural characteristics are not unchanging. If we emphasize the unitary characteristics, and make a simple dichotomy between tradition and modernity, it is not in line with the real life of the present time, and it can neither cause the audience to empathize with it, nor further "otherize" the ethnic minority cultures. "It is not in line with the real life nowadays. In the process of foreign dissemination, such a film will not be able to show the foreign audience a real ethnic minority and the real China, but will deepen the stereotypical image of our country as "poor" and "backward".

4 Discourse Breakthrough: Taking the Road of Chinese Modernized National Cinema

4.1 Firmly mine, but with a heart for the world

Chinese modernization is an independent, confident and open modernization, and the Party and the State have repeatedly emphasized the need to build a positive narrative framework that focuses on us in its foreign communication work. Ethnic minority films should naturally adhere to the "me-centered" principle, establish the narrative of ethnic minorities, and face up to the problem of the absence of subjectivity in the past.

To firmly adhere to the "I am the main focus", firstly, the story should be told by ethnic minorities, and at the same time encourage multi-ethnicity to participate in the narrative and write the memories of the times by multi-ethnicity; secondly, it is necessary to tell the stories of ethnic minorities themselves, and take ethnic minorities as the core of the narrative and the main body of the story, and tell the joys, sorrows, happiness, anger and the situation of the time. The second is to tell the stories of ethnic minorities themselves, taking them as the core and main body of the narrative, and telling the joys, sorrows, and situations of the ethnic minority groups. For example, films such as "Yanbian Boys" and "Biluo Xueshan" focus on ethnic minorities with delicate and calm cameras, interpreting their own ethnic identities and cultures through the films.

At the same time, Chinese modernization is not a modernization outside the world, but should adhere to the methodology of "embracing the world" from the standpoint of "taking the world as our own". For national cinema, "embracing the world" is more often expressed in the concern for the common destiny of mankind. General Secretary Xi once creatively put forward the idea of a community of human destiny, "We always pay attention to the future destiny of mankind from a global perspective." Constructing a community of human destiny is the essential requirement of Chinese-style

modernization.[7] When ethnic minorities write about their own hearts and minds, they must always pay attention to the common "human being". The specificity of Chinese stories should be combined with people's universal psychological demands, and national identity should be integrated into common emotions. The values of harmony between human beings and nature and the care for women embodied in "The Marriage of Tuya" have built up an emotional chain between foreigners and Chinese people, enhancing the recognition of overseas audiences, and thus winning the Golden Bear at the 57th Berlin Film Festival.

4.2 Symbols Expressing the national character and portraying the national spirit

General Secretary Xi Jinping once said, "A nation that has abandoned or betrayed its own history and culture cannot move smoothly towards modernization." [8] The construction of the discourse of "Chinese-style modernization" must adhere to the principle of "starting from China's characteristics" and enhance cultural self-awareness. [9] Chinese minority films should also resist the hegemony of Western discourse, highlight the cultural heritage of Chinese modernization, and make great efforts to write about ethnic characteristics.

Minority natural scenery, customs is the natural label of the minority, breakthrough and transformation is not to deny the characteristics of the show, but that the display of ethnicity should not be consumer culture, should abide by their own independence. Minority characteristics show should not just cater to others under the symbols of the empty pile, should seek and the organic integration of the art of film, minority regions as the typical environment of the characters, the national characteristics, national culture into the film story, break through the previous rigid story routine, so that minority stories into excellent Chinese stories.

At the same time, Chinese civilization has evolved over a long period of time, forming spiritual and cultural qualities such as "tolerance" and "peace", and forming a powerful cultural force to promote the development of Chinese-style modernization. Minority movies can also break through the symbolic appearance, and deeply portray the national spirit and moral concepts behind, so as to make the national character more flesh and blood, and more historical thickness. The Cocomnuts is an anti-legendary bystander's interpretation of the characters' understanding of the "dignity of life" and faith. Although the film does not intentionally emphasize all kinds of ethnic characteristics and symbols, it is full of "ethnicity" all the time.

4.3 Confronting Modernized Discourse and Setting the Narrative Straight

The path of Chinese-style modernization requires attention to reconciling the cultural tensions between the Chinese and the Western, the traditional and the modern. The modernization rhetoric in many contemporary ethnic minority films is lacking, and the narrative stance is very

vague. Although such images satisfy the Western desire for voyeurism and spectacle consumption, and may be able to gain good reputation internationally, they do not help to tell a good Chinese story.

Minority films should face up to the modernization and development of minority regions, correct their narrative stance, fully empathize with minority groups, and show the real life of minorities and the real problems they face. For example, films such as "Parents' City Life" and "The Girl from Xilan" take a realist perspective on the plight of ethnic minority groups in the city, and do not choose to cover up the modernization process of ethnic minorities, but rather try to show the modernization situation of ethnic minority groups from an objective point of view.

In addition, current Chinese minority films often use a generalized narrative of suffering to tell the image of the ethnic group, and treat cultural collision from the perspective of urban-rural dichotomy, but if they only talk about suffering, they will face an imbalance in the narrative. The international arena should present works with more diversified themes to show the world a three-dimensional ethnic minority. Minority films should appropriately present a positive image of the ethnic groups, seek an organic combination of modernization discourse and national rejuvenation discourse, and interpret the positive image of the ethnic groups themselves as they seek to evolve and break through under the circumstances of the times. For example, "The Bird's Nest" does not reject modern civilization, but presents both traditional and modern civilization, showing the similarities between the two; "The Quiet Mani Shi" even embodies a tolerant attitude towards modern civilization.

5 Summary

According to Hu Puzhong, "Ethnic minority films originally carried the narrative of China's modern nation-state, which naturally involves the construction of the meaning of a nation-state." [10] At present, we need to improve the mechanism of cultural communication, tell Chinese stories well to the outside world, and show a good image of China to the world. Chinese minority films will play an important role in this regard, and Chinese modernization provides us with Chinese wisdom on how to "tell it well".

Since the 21st century, China's ethnic minority films have made great achievements, but on the way to the world, to participate in the international competition, we still need to accumulate experience in continuous attempts, not only to adhere to the localized characteristics, but also to have a global vision, to fully demonstrate the beauty of the unity and integration of the multi-ethnicity of the Chinese nation, not humble, not narrow-minded, in the film to write a capital 'people', as the Chinese minority film, as the Chinese minority film modernization speech. It should not be mean or narrow-minded, and write a capital 'human being' in the movie, as an important part of Chinese movies, and make it more mature and wonderful." Chinese minority

films are deeply rooted in the soil of China's excellent traditional culture, revolutionary culture and advanced socialist culture. At the new historical juncture, Chinese minority films should have a dialogue with the world with a modernized vision of Chinese style, and glow with a refreshing and unique light of "cultural soft power".

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