

Film and Television Historiography: Forwarding Along Interacting Between Image and Historiography

Qiwei Xu

Hebei University Baoding, Hebei Province 071000, China.

xuqiwei_68@aliyun.com

Abstract

Presenting History through film and television, for it doesn't only enable to improve and change the unilateralism on the previous writing historiography, but can shake or even upset the departed thinking pattern. This article studies theoretically the reality and practicing of film and television historiography, and on a purpose of establishing the communicational channel between historian circle and media field, enhancing interaction, observing and recording the past, present and future in a way of diversity, opening and tolerance.

Keywords

Image historiophoty interaction.

1. Conception on Film and Television Historiophoty

The word, Historiophoty comes from a book wrote by Hayden White in 1988, as "historiophoty" in English. In 1993, Professor Zhou Liangkai of Taiwan Zhongxing University translated it into Film and Television , also translated definition of film and television defined by Hayden White into 'communicating the history and its opinion through the discussion of visional image and film. His main purpose is setting up the organic relations between the films and the history, and advocating the film will be the other way to become the historical record. In 1996, Zhang Guangzhi, the professor in History Department of Fudan University released his article, as Film and Television Historiophoty: New Filed of Historiophoty. Thus, the similar concept of film and television initially entered into the academic filed in mainland of China. In 1998, professor Zhang Guangzhi published his work of Film and Television Historiophoty. Professor Zhang Guangzhi takes the historical theme of film and television as the study object, he thinks that it is the goal for pursuing the perfect combination between historical and artistical facticity^①. Film and Television Historiophoty is a new subject which communicating the history and its conception and spirit. Its revolutionary meaning is to provide the chances of reviewing the historiophoty thought, concept and method. It re-posed the various history study methods which include the writing historiophoty and film and television historiophoty, also impacting and finding the hidden truth from different ways, angels, thought methods, even the different concept, thus establishing and restoring the original history stage which is more confirming the truth.

2. The Truth of Film and Television Historiophoty

The concept of Film and Television Historiophoty exists in some certainty by comparing with the Writing Historiophoty. Some traditional historians hold the doubtful manners on presenting history on method of film. No matter the film practitioners are so serious and loyal, either they are devoting themselves to present the theme of the film, but finally, the history presents out of the film can not satisfy the historians (of course it maybe meets the needs of historians being as the movie fans). After all, something must be changed while the writing things transfer to the screen, it will change the understanding of the people who works by writing something for the past. Therefore, the historians' sense of simulating can be replaced by query. ^②

It is obviously that it is the dispute to keep the truth and objectiveness for the history. Presenting the history by the manner of film can not be easily accepted by the historians who used to present the

history by writing. The traditional historical conception includes the misconception that the history is objective, however, the historian is not the machine. They have their own acknowledge and understanding about the history upon different times and levels in society. They cannot dismiss some subjective factors, the writers have bring their subjective ideology to their works.

Moreover, there are too many deficiency in the objective history and became too much historical faultage. Because there is no efficient and complete record of original historical material, most of the historical material was not only destroyed on purpose or non-intentional, but also in some certainty, many of the historical events have no any trace at all. Especially, the mental thoughts are just like this. Not speak of most of those kept historical material are often misunderstanding by human. ③

People usually chose the illustrated history based on their own judgment and experience. Anyone who make decision through language, their views and opinions are all restricted on some certain historical times and the history of language. The history which presents in front of them is not the history nature. Thus, the history is the illustration result but the finding one. ④

Hayden White, the American historian, he thinks that the history is uncertainty and it is not the unique, but there are various types of history while there are theoretical illustrations. The history, in some certainty, maybe the self-representation of the historical writers. Toynbee says in his famous book History Research that all of the history cannot has no the fiction completely. Choosing, arranging or representing the history is already a method within the inventing scope. Additionally, he said also, if the historian is not the great artist, then, he cannot be a great historian. Invariable confirmation of history doesn't exist, even is the most royal history material, but among them, there are different opinion, suggestion even the prejudice. ⑤

As the point view of the film technician, no matter the film with the historical theme or the writing works, there are the subjective factors involves in. Only the former type is more obvious, the latter one is invisible. The special characteristics of the historiophoty doesn't limit for chasing the objective fact, but is trying to seek out the new way to observe the previous method which can be explain the history by using the Fiction. Why the Fiction uses the special typing? The most importance of historiophoty means it doesn't need to tell the truth about the history, but emphasizes the choosing method for telling. The historiophoty aims not to provide the vision tool which can be opened for the writing historiophoty. But to offer people another visible angel and method for explaining the history.

⑥

White thinks that the same events or the events order can be involved in different narrating mode for getting the different meaning and illustration. In another way, as for the same historical facts, it may reflect the historical facts in a diametrically opposite way by adopting the different narrate strategy (if it is the different thinking way). Upon this conception, the historical facts is narrating its truth. That's why White said: " the history is film only for the conformity in spirit, it is impossible, neither necessary confirms with the objective history " ⑦. The truth of historiophoty doesn't confirms with the historical facts in exterior, visible or superficial, but in internal, speculative and deep inside. As for re-presenting or presenting the history, the objective intervention is the unavoidable common nature for writing history or presenting it in film. Both are blending the self-Awareness.

3. The Practice of the Historiophoty

The writing history relays on the words to present the history, it narrates the previous events through the true and correct the history. The historiophoty presents the previous events by sound, light-ray, picture and the montage way. It summaries and selects the events, creates the classic people through the fiction and imagination way for re-presenting the history. Mr. Zhang Guangzhi thinks that comparing with the writing history, the limitation of historiophoty shows that it is longer than the narration but shorter than the analysis. The writing history works tells the reader what happened and why happened through investigation and organization. It introduces and appraise the different opinion on historiophoty through analysis and explanation on a purpose of understanding the

complexity and diversity of the history. Although the historical film can make some critical thinking for the presenting theme through sound or subtitle, but the film is the historiophoty mainly realized through the characters and the plots. Generally speaking, this straight presentation and the complicate thought needs to be made up from the writing historiophoty. ⑧

The practice of the film and television historiophoty and its character of the intersect subject, besides the function of research, the other one is facing the common people. It used for spreading the historical acknowledge. The social function of the film and television historiophoty is taking the role of media of the common people historiophoty. In this new media times, people read something in words transit from the image. The historical film and television became one of the main way to know history and the traditional culture. It is the producer's duty how to make the history come out from the writing way and offers the information and thought for the film and the television, thus makes people get enlightenment from the film and the television which confirms with the truth of the history. The historians both in China and the abroad made the attempt on this.

In the recent years, there are many rigorous historical plays, the play and the commentary usually wrote by the historians, such as the TV plays of "The Political Times of Zhenguan", "Long Story of Zhuanguan", "Create Flourish Times" etc., They are the other narration mode for telling history on Tang dynasty establishment and Zhenguan political control times. There are many successful practical historiophotical samples on film and television. Rober A Rosonston, the American historian, his two main historical works have been produced to the film, he himself even participated producing it.

Natalie Zemon Davis, the American female historian is the consultant for the movie of *Le Retour de Martin Guerre* which submit the historical sense in maximum. The film re-presents the society of France in the 16th century, such as the norms on marriage and inheritance and its social meaning. In order to introduce the historical background and present the real rural area in France, even the people's mental status in that time, Davis published her book of *Le Retour de Martin Guerre*. The movie presents the real rural life in France in 16th century through the scenery, garment and the stage property, but the main point is, the film represent the history through the people's character, relations, historical events and the language by ways of investigating the historical materials. Both of the book and the movie have gain the success. It is the successful sample on practical film and television historiophotical.

At present, after many historical plays showing, the relevant historical works are also popular. There is the possibility for cooperation and cultural blending between history and the movie. Enhancing the research on film and television historiophoty, it doesn't mean to displace the traditional research method on history, but it should combine with the latter method for historical research. Both of them can be improved and progress mutually and guiding the historical research practice. "Just like the professor, Yu Pei said that the variety of the historiophoty method is doesn't to replace or weaken the Maxism historiophoty method, it refers to enhance and improve it furtherly, thus make it play the further role for the research of the historical science. Researching the method is not for replacing the former effective historiophoty method, but it is the made up method, it enriches and improves the historiophoty method upon the original methods." ⑨

It not only improve or change the former one-sidedness on the writing historiophoty for presenting the history through the movie and television, the main reason is it can affect and even turnover the former thinking trend. It records and observes the past, present and the future of the human being in the way of diversification, opening and comprehensive concept. The historiophoty research faces the common people and orientates to the society. It is the necessary way to seek the way to increase the art among the history consisting principle for the historiophoty and the historical film and the television plays.

References

- [1] Writer: Zhang Guangzhi 《Represent History-Reviewing Historical Study on Film and Television》, 《Academic Research》 [J].Vol.8 in 2000.
- [2] Robert A. Rosenstone. History in images/history in words: Reflections on the possibility of really putting history onto film. American historical review 93, no.5(December 1988): p. 1173.
- [3] Yang Yu, Hu Cheng: 《Thought and Method on Historiography》 [M]. Nanjing University Publish House: 1996 Edition, Page 365.
- [4] Chief Editor: Zhu Yiyuan: 《Theory on Modern Western Literature and Art》 [M]. East China Normal University Publish House: 2nd edition in 2005, Page 408.
- [5] Arnold Toynbee: 《History Study》 (2nd Part) [M]. Translated by Cao Weifeng, Shanghai People's Publish House, Edition 1986, Page 224.
- [6] Writer: Wu Ziyang 《Thinking on Film and Television Historiography》, from 《Study on History of Historiography》 [J]. Vol.4 in 2001, Page 54-55 .
- [7] Hayden White. Historiography and Historical Study [J]. The American Historical Review, Vol. 93, No. 5, (Dec., 1988), pp. 1195
- [8] Writer: Zhang Guangzhi. 《Difference Between Film, Television and Historical Study on Writing, Three-theory on Film, Television and Historical Study》, 《Study and Research》 [J]. 2002, (1).
- [9] Writer: Yu Pei; 《30 Years Study on Chinese Historical Study Theory: 1978-2008》, 《Society Science Strategy》 [J]. Vol.2 in 2008