

Appreciate the Shaping of Female Images in Sports Films Based on the "Million Dollar Baby"

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Abstract: Typical characters are indispensable aesthetic elements in film and television texts. The persistent and tough-girl image makes the movie "Million Dollar Baby" win the 77th Academy Award for Best Picture. The warm story between Maggie and Frankie is different from the general sports film, but interprets a new type of teacher-student relationship. As the director of the film said, "This is not a real boxing story, but a story about love. An old man, devastated by the loss of his father-daughter relationship, finds a young girl who makes him feel like a father again". Maggie's appearance broke the perfect female image in the traditional American film and overturned the weak appearance of women. The confidence and persistence revealed between Maggie's words and deeds won the unanimous praise of the audience, thus making an excellent sports film.

1. Introduction

The Oscar-winning movie, "Million Dollar Baby", has been labelled "sports film", "violence", "inspirational", "love" and "chasing dreams". The film expresses multi-level and multi-faceted contents, including sports competition, belief, dignity, dream, family affection, friendship and other diversified contents. The main line of the story tells the story of Maggie, a young female boxer in her early 30s, who overcomes many difficulties and obstacles, realizes her boxing dream with the careful guidance of the coach Frankie and her own talent and continuous efforts, but finally chooses the euthanasia due to the serious injury [1]. There are few characters and few names in the film, but the few female characters portrayed in the film also have their own characteristics and different personalities. In particular, the cultural connotation and philosophy represented by the vivid female image of the heroine Maggie is worth discussing and analyzing.

2. Positioning of Maggie's Character Image

In "Million Dollar Baby", Maggie is just nobody. Born into poverty in the Ozark region of southwest Missouri, Maggie grew up to live on her meager income as a waitress. And her hobby - boxing, also incompatible with the concept of people at that time, which reflects Maggie's "non-mainstream" side. There was always a certain prejudice against female boxers among the common people of those days, which was evident from Maggie's mother.

As a newcomer, Maggie had a tough time winning recognition from boxing coaches who distrusted her. In such an unequal situation, the objective situation is very unfavorable to her, and she has to take the most difficult road to pursue her dream. Maggie's pursuit of the boxing dream is persistent, or even paranoid. When she is taunted and despised by other male trainers in the boxing club, she does not stop practicing, but bravely chooses to fight back. She is challenging the patriarchal society with her body and practical actions, resisting the oppression of patriarchy and struggling to defend her dignity and rights. When a man gambles on all his pursuit for his dream, nothing can stand in his way [2].

In Maggie's view, only boxing can reflect the meaning of her life. She puts her hope on this dream that is not understood by others, hoping to realize the ideal of life and change the fate of life. When she was lucky enough to get advice from Eddie, even though she can only drink water and eat bread on the bus home, her face is filled with a happy smile chasing dreams, which is the embodiment of her subjective pursuit of life different from men. She breaks the psychological

prejudice of others and does not let herself be trapped in the female function and their own dreams.. What kind of person she wants to be depends not on the nature of heaven, not on fate, but on her own choice, on her actual action, on her own "intervention", which is her freedom. This is the flower of boxing's own choice of growth.

Maggie's struggle can be said to be full of individual heroism. Without an agent or a coach, Maggie practiced hard for three years and fought in the boxing ring. When she finds out that Frankie is a good coach, she uses the money she saved to pay the club's membership fee for six months and insists on using her actions to convert him. Under the guidance of her coach, she practices hard and never lets up, fighting for victory with her stubborn spirit and talent as a boxer. A flood of shouts from the audience have witnessed Maggie's progress from an ordinary individual to a hero. Maggie tries to commit suicide after paralyzing in bed, which also reflects that a hero is unwilling to be mediocre. In short, Maggie interprets the meaning of the hero with her personal struggle.

3. Shaping of Maggie's Characters

3.1. Confidence and power in language

Maggie's language is personalized, confident and powerful. When Maggie first introduced herself to Frankie, she said, "I took part in the matting game, I won, I did a good job, I think you are interested in training me", and the words reveals satisfaction and confidence in her ability, but Frankie walks away with disdain. After that, Frankie is moved by compassion after Eddie's persuasion and hearing Maggie's tragic experience, so he agrees to train Maggie. Maggie cannot wait to interject "you won't regret it", "I promise I'll work very hard", and after Frankie mentions a series of "no" rules, Maggie replies excitedly, "We make a deal". This is the moment of transformation in their relationship and the beginning of a further increase in Maggie's confidence.

The audience can see that Maggie is wise. She knows that only Frankie can lead her to success, so she forces herself to obey orders and be confident in her abilities. As a woman, Maggie's strength and wisdom in the face of the opposite sex's provocations dazzles audience. For example, Maggie's pride is hurt by her family's taunts. Her families do not praise her, but despise her, and most importantly, she makes a fool of herself in front of her most respected coach. At this moment, thoughtful Maggie and shameless family form a sharp contrast, and the audience is lost in it. At the end of the film, Maggie hopes to get her mother's approval in the hospital bed, "Do you watch the game? I played well", but her mother only focuses on the result, "I heard that it was not your fault, but you lost". Maggie is so desperate that she refuses her mother's request and kicks the family out of the hospital room. "Necessity is human nature and the most fundamental driving force of all activities". In her heart, Maggie longs for her achievements to be recognized, which is in line with the logic of life. She hopes to get the care of her family, which is in line with the emotional truth.

3.2. Distinctive personality

Whether the character is distinct and unique is the main link in which a film attracts the audience and arouses aesthetic resonance. In general, character is also the core that drives the direction of film narrative. The character Maggie in "Million Dollar Baby" has both aesthetic functions.

First, the film adopts the artistic technique of contrast in character shaping. For one thing, it is the contrast between the external image of the character and the inner spirit. Maggie is born poor without decent work, and is still alone on the edge of society in her early years. From the image point of view, Maggie is dressed in plain and unkempt clothes. Compared with the simple external image, Maggie's inner world is extremely rich. She is clinging to her dream and hopeful for the future. In the film, Maggie shows the strong side as a man, while the feminine side is less reflected in her, which makes the inner world of the characters more eye-catching to a certain extent. For another, the film further highlights Maggie's character through the differences between the two protagonists.

Second, character also exists as a narrative motive force. Maggie is born at the bottom of society,

but unwilling to mediocrity. Although she is despised and ignored in the real society, she still does not give up her dream of life [3]. It is this stubborn and persistent character that determines the fate of the characters and promotes the narrative development of the film. Maggie's struggle is made by her character, and her traditional virtues make Maggie a firm practitioner of the "American Dream".

3.3. Emotional delicacy

Character is one of the core of the film. In the creation of "Million Dollar Baby", Eastwood first establishes the principle of non-dualistic and facial characterization on the whole, and then enriches the main characters, so that the audience can feel no distance from them. When shaping characters, for example, Maggie, Frankie, and Scrap, the director makes public their good sides, but does not hide their shortcomings. For those who are not the main characters or even the "masses", some representativeness is given to them, so that the audience can feel the social atmosphere from them.

In "Million Dollar Baby", the audience sees a flesh-and-blood protagonist named Maggie, helped by Director Eastwood's emotional portrayal of the character. As mentioned above, Maggie's appearance is quite masculine, but she also has a strong personality. If Maggie lacks delicate emotional performance, she will be considered by the audience as a completely masculine image. In order to avoid this situation, Eastwood focuses on portraying Maggie's delicate female emotions, thus perfecting her feminine side.

First, Maggie experiences the process from obscurity to spotlight and from poverty to wealth, but what doesn't change is her love for the people around her. Second, sadness is also an important part of Maggie's emotion, and it is also consistent with the tone of her destiny, which runs through Maggie's life and is conveyed to the audience from the screen [4]. Through the shaping of Maggie's tragic image, Eastwood causes the audience to think deeply about real life.

4. Summary

Maggie is just an ordinary woman who breaks through all kinds of restrictions and obstacles on the way of pursuing her dream. She pursues her ideal with her whole life and dares to challenge the traditional concepts and thinking mode of the patriarchal society. In the face of difficulties, Maggie always holds the greatest enthusiasm for life, and keeps positive and optimistic attitude to overcome difficulties and achieve achievements with her indomitable spirit and indomitable perseverance. Although she dies young in the film, as a female with independent personality, she dares to choose her own way of life and pays everything for her dream, which makes people deeply think, and also brings enlightenment for people in complex social relations to choose their life style and realize their personal value.

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