

# The value of the theme TV drama highlights and expression innovation -- Take the TV drama *This World* as an example

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**Abstract:** Theme TV series are dramas that take the theme of today's society as the theme, in order to promote mainstream culture, shape collective values, and encourage a positive and healthy material and spiritual life. In recent years, thematic TV dramas have been favored by young people and the capital market, which is a very positive cultural phenomenon. This article takes the popular theme TV series "This World" in 2022 as the main text, and discusses the value expression, innovative narrative techniques and artistic image techniques of the theme TV series in the new era, then explores how it reflects the original creative intention of the creators.

**Keywords:** Theme TV series; Innovative expression; Narrative method; Mainstream values

## 1. Introduction

The main themes of contemporary China are reform and opening up, the Red War of Resistance, peaceful development, and the heroic fight against COVID-19.<sup>[1]</sup> To sing the theme is to adhere to the principle of people-oriented. As an important means of presenting art, the principle of being close to reality, life and the masses can promote the mainstream values of "democracy, rule of law, fairness and justice, honesty and fraternity" in human society. Since 2018, under the policy and financial support of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television and local authorities, it has become the current trend to create thematic works with distinct themes and market response. In 2019, which marks the 70th anniversary of the People's Republic of China, the main theme works dedicated to the motherland have long occupied the first place on the screen. The number of key shows alone reached nearly 100, many of which were well received by the audience and hit the market. In the past two years, a new batch of thematic TV series represented by "The Feeling of Mountains and Seas", "So Much Beauty of the River and Mountains", "The Age of Awakening" and "The World" have won the market and reputation. For a time, the theme has become a high-frequency word in the field of TV series.

## 2. Industry break: the youth of the main melody TV drama has become a new highlight

If mainstream works cannot occupy the main position of audio-visual creation, it is impossible for art to express ideological demands and people's deep spiritual needs, let alone generate widespread empathy. Based on the production and living practices of the masses and their joys and sorrows, realistic TV dramas present the lifestyles and living conditions of various regions and industries, and depict the on-screen portraits of the people's hot lives.

In the era of media convergence, the communication content, mode and scene show the characteristics of fragmentation, a large number of audiences are divided, and entering the "net generation" of young market is also the main theme TV drama needs to face the challenge. Since the early theme TV dramas were mostly created and disseminated by the state, both the age and the artistic expression were divorced from the young audience market. Both the industry and the audience were mostly "micro-aging" age groups. Under the circumstances of the continuous restructuring and reform of the film and television industry, the main theme TV plays cater to the mainstream market and enter the vision of the young audience, forming a new mainstream TV youth culture. The theme TV series has become a new object to attract young users' audio-visual consumption, occupying the main position of the current audio-visual creation, and is becoming an important carrier of upper class value communication. These TV dramas reflect reality, observe reality and inspire reality. They provide references and solutions for current social dilemmas and problems, and show strong creative vitality.

The prosperity of theme TV series is the result of practitioners respecting market rules, responding to the needs of the audience and innovating in recent years.

### **3. Paradigm Innovation: the creative expansion of image art expression**

#### **3.1. Narrative: Reality and detail become the new features**

Starting with the real details and following the creation law of "big things are not empty, small things are not", it has become the outstanding highlight of the theme TV series. Through a number of vivid and touching stories, can feel the scene, restore the style of The Times, at the same time inspire the contemporary youth to work hard. The main theme TV series *This World* is close to the life of the general public, from the delicate video narrative techniques, for people's life to write a song about the vicissitudes of Chinese society changes.

One of the things that makes this movie so popular is its meticulous attention to detail. For example, at the beginning of the work, it does not use grand camera language to describe the background of the time, but highlights the special era of the story through the Zhou brothers' account of keeping the books. For another example, the character and fate of the second sister Zhou Rong is hinted to the audience at the beginning. She goes to Guizhou Mountain alone in pursuit of love despite her parents' opposition. Here, it expresses that Zhou Rong is an independent woman who yearns for romantic love and is indecisive. The creator's close connection with the plot of the drama makes the truth of details particularly moved, and the truth of details is the premise of shaping the truth of art, which is well proved by the TV series *This World*.

In this work, there are a lot of descriptions about the policies of The Times, such as going to the countryside, joining the army, reform and opening up, etc. However, the play abandons the previous rigid explanations, but integrates the background and environment of The Times into the fate of each minor character, and uses their stories to influence the direction of the plot. In the drama, the family members of Zhou's brother and sister look at the pattern of thousands of families, and the personal fate profoundly echoes the requirements of The Times. The elder brother Zhou Bingyi entered the regiment, entered the university, and realized the expectation of "looking forward to the success of his son", but he never forgot his own origin. Under the good situation of the reform and opening up, he insisted on carrying out pilot projects and committed himself to doing practical things for the people. Portray a dedicated and dedicated cadre. The second sister Zhou Rong is a person who thinks independently. When she was young, she went to Guizhou mountains to pursue the love she yearned for. Later, after her own efforts, she was admitted to a famous university and portrayed a free and independent female image of knowledge. The establishment of such characters overlapped with the "independent women" promoted by the society to a certain extent, and also caused audience empathy to some extent. Even though Zhou Bingkun's life is ordinary and difficult, he is the happiest. He is a member of the social collective, is also the representative of the grassroots workers, and is also the continuation of the patriarchal image. The three brothers and sisters of the Zhou family respectively represent three different groups of people, which is also the real social microcosm of thousands of families at that time. They have their own brand of that era. The audience can feel the true feelings and the vicissitudes of history from the realistic expression of the play.

#### **3.2. Emotion: the human fireworks of ordinary people**

Only when an excellent film and television work is emotionally close to the audience and moves the audience can it tell a good Chinese story that can touch the audience and make them think deeply. The excellent theme works are rooted in the soil of people's life, reflect the inner emotions of ordinary people, show a stronger appeal than the past grand narrative, and represent the important direction of the current theme TV drama creation. By depicting the portraits of the three generations of the Zhou family, the theme TV drama "The World" not only vividly reflects the love and hate entanglements related to family affection, friendship and love around them, but also highlights the complex and multi-faceted human nature and experiences the various tastes of life, thus conveying an optimistic attitude towards life to the audience.

In *This World*, the concept of dialectical materialism is integrated into the portrayal of characters in the film, that is, any independent individual is composed of "good" and "bad". It breaks the single expression of non-black and white in the previous TV series and breaks down the rigid boundary between the two. It can be said that the life circumstances of each individual in the drama can fluctuate

with the changes of *The Times*. The various emotions reflected by the characters in the drama, such as benevolence, greed, loyalty and jealousy, contain a profound interpretation of the complex human nature and touch the most real side of human nature. For example, Zhou Bingkun's childhood friend Qiao Chunyan, a fortunate, outspoken woman, when the life was poor she also did a good job in foot repair work career, trying to be best one of the people around, but with the improvement of the material standard of living, in order to be able to be in Guangzipian demolition more than a house compensation, she chose to live in the old house next to the temporary set up a hut, barely get by. When she learned that the deaf people often made progress in allocating to the house, she ignored the past friendship, gathered the villagers to protest, and finally ended up in a situation where greed was laughed at, so that the audience could see Chunyan's face blackened in front of interests. Also, such as Bingkun carpenter factory worker Sun Ganchao, has always been moral, hard work man. He spent his whole life working for a living and friends. Eventually, he got sick from overwork. It happened that his son was in urgent need of college tuition and chose to commit suicide by lying on the rails to escape. This accident left his wife and children to live by people, which can not help but feel helpless and sad life. Gong Weize, known as the "security guard" of the Guangzipian, was a conscientious and responsible grass-roots worker before he was promoted to the post of police chief. With the gradual progress of his official position, he also lost himself in the face of money and power, becoming a truly corrupt "parent officer".

Each of the characters in the film is vivid and full of vitality. The creator not only lets the audience see the characters' loving, honest, down-to-earth, sincere and precious qualities, but also shows the complex and multi-dimensional distortion, struggle and imprisonment of human nature onto the screen, revealing the fireworks of ordinary people that are both warm and close to life, with high aesthetic value.

### ***3.3. Theme: Take root in real life and restore the style of *The Times****

A TV drama that can win the audience's love must have the characteristics of satisfying the audience's aesthetic expectations and habits. Under the main theme, TV dramas shoulder the important task of carrying forward the core values of the society. In the subject matter and shooting techniques, they often apply the old-fashioned mode and fall into the situation of homogeneity. Audiences are prone to aesthetic fatigue and it is difficult to arouse the response. How to tell the Chinese story well and enhance the national confidence of the audience is the main theme TV drama should think about the problem.

The success of the TV series "The World" undoubtedly provides a novel approach, a large number of scenes close to real life and the halo of the creation techniques, so that the audience immersed in, meet their aesthetic expectations, and constantly trigger emotional resonance. The TV series covers major social changes such as reform and opening up, while also showing the close connection between the fate of the small people and the wider social environment. These themes, which are integrated into the development of society and go deep into the personal affairs of ordinary people, allow more audiences to see themselves from the characters in the drama, see the real problems from the contradictions in the drama, and feel the beautiful vision for the future from the stories in the drama.<sup>[2]</sup>

## **4. Value shift: The TV drama industry returns to its true nature, highlighting the mainstream value**

### ***4.1. Policy guidance: The new atmosphere of the industry after comprehensive management***

Good literary and artistic works can correct customs, change people's hearts, and pass on the value of upward goodness. Adhering to the mainstream value is the political embodiment of content management and the foundation of the audiovisual industry of radio and television networks. It expresses the aspirations, creativity and achievements of the Chinese people, and presents the spirit and atmosphere of the new era in an all-round and panoramic manner. This is a clear requirement for radio, television and network audiovisual industries to be the mainstream value dissemination front.<sup>[3]</sup>

Creating a good cultural ecology and development environment is an important basis for creating high-quality cultural products. The comprehensive management in the field of culture and entertainment has further improved the policies and measures in the field of culture and entertainment. A good market order has provided an important guarantee for the healthy development of the industry and checked the unhealthy tendency of the industry. Better job opportunities for entertainers.

#### **4.2. Content is king: The innovation of quality content is the key to the high-quality development of the industry**

In the age of digital development, the debate between technology and content is gradually evolving into the opposite trend. How should domestic melodious TV dramas get out of the dilemma? The author believes that the rapid development of technology at present has injected fresh blood into the creation of film and television drama, which solves the previously unbridgeable gap in technology and realizes the rich imagination in the minds of creators. The audience can indeed feel the progress of domestic drama, but on the other hand, the technical level of Chinese film and television drama still lags behind that of foreign countries. And the arrival of the Internet information society has greatly expanded the audience's viewing field of film and television. It is not surprising for the audience if it relies on technology to achieve the visual fantasy effect. At any time, people's desire for high-quality content and quality will not change. Therefore, for the creation of today's TV series, especially the creation of the main theme TV series, sticking to the "content is king" is still a right way.

The innovation of quality content is the key to the high-quality development of the industry. Especially when TV dramas enter the "customized era", they should adhere to the content as king and increase content innovation. For the audience, the biggest appeal of drama lies in the excellent works themselves, and high-quality products integrating ideological and artistic quality have always been the first choice of the audience. Chinese TV drama works are based on meeting the spiritual and cultural needs of the people, so it is necessary and key to produce high-quality works for the development of high quality in the industry.

#### **4.3. Return to the Original: Make the expression of mainstream values more "down-to-earth"**

Theme creation will never be out of date, and there is no saying of being out of date. The theme alone cannot determine the quality of a work, nor limit its development into a fine and excellent work. However, without the expression of mainstream values, the theme work will be overshadowed, just like water without a source.

Major themes lead the direction of creation, and always adhere to the "people-centered" creation orientation. At present, TV drama creation is always calling for the expression of mainstream values "down-to-earth", which also inspires TV drama writers to return to their original aspirations, write for the people and sing songs for The Times. As a matter of fact, more and more theme TV dramas have created a hot search situation on the real drama. Many audiences find their own commonalities in the theme TV dramas of realism, and trigger resonance; At the same time, there will be more creators based on the current realistic themes to collect audience responses, which will be able to reflect the current social problems and difficult phenomena, more "down-to-earth" to the audience, to get the attention of the social government, to solve, and realize the two mutually beneficial.

## **5. Conclusions**

In 2022, the hit theme TV series "*This World*" has gained high audience rating and high audience reputation, and also achieved a breakthrough in the circle of previous theme TV series. As a model of theme TV series, "*This World*" also plays an important guiding significance for the development of future theme TV series. Yet its success is no accident. It not only actively responds to the mainstream values of the country, but also innovates in the narrative, arousing the audience's resonance with true feelings and realistic themes. It uses the fireworks of ordinary people to elaborate the fate story of small people in the social background; It conveys the good qualities of sincerity, kindness, integrity, optimism and so on to everyone. It transmits the positive energy and mainstream values of the Chinese nation to every corner of the society. Under the development of the era of integrated media, the main theme TV series will get unprecedented technical help, which inspires the creators not only to strive to create excellent Chinese stories, but also to flexibly use the advantages of new media to expand the communication efficiency. While strictly controlling the quality of the content, we should also listen to the voice of the audience and collect the voices of The Times to make continuous contributions to the development of the film and television industry.

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