

# On the Exportation of Soft Power in Globalization with the Exemplification of the Film *Wolf warrior* (II)

Baoliang Peng

Faculty of English Language and Culture, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou, China

**Email address:**

blpeng63@163.com

**To cite this article:**

Baoliang Peng. On the Exportation of Soft Power in Globalization with the Exemplification of the Film *Wolf warrior* (II). *International Journal of Literature and Arts*. Special Issue: *Humanity and Science: China's Intercultural Communication with the Outside World in the New Era*. Vol. 8, No. 3, 2020, pp. 100-107. doi: 10.11648/j.ijla.20200803.11

**Received:** February 27, 2020; **Accepted:** March 12, 2020; **Published:** April 8, 2020

---

**Abstract:** In globalization culture is capitalized and invested as a commodity. But the commodified culture not only makes money for an exporter but also disseminates its cultural values with another culture. Both the success of the film *Wolf Warrior* (II) at home and its failure to be a hit abroad lend weight to the argument. The pros and cons about it evidence the on-going status quo of cultural exchange in One Way One Belt ("The Belt and Road Initiative") the Chinese global project. Therefore this research makes endeavors to prove the power that story telling particularly the narrative trinity: event, plot and story make money on the one hand and on the other works as site of pedagogy where people learn and experience. This way people find the power as such congenial and innocuous. Thereupon the film director Jing Wu chooses the events as can be seen in the film and "strings" them in such a way that the Chinese viewers are mad about it whereas the viewers abroad especially those in the West sort of turn it down. The striking contrast in box office suggests the fact that cinematic experience is a process of negotiation between director and film goer, which Director Wu has to take into good consideration if he expects to make a hit with his film next time abroad.

**Keywords:** Soft Power, Globalization, Narrative Trinity

---

## 1. Context: "One Way One Belt"

To key in "one way one belt" ("The Belt and Road Initiative") at Baidu Search, one will find it interpreted almost unanimously as "a world-wide economic zone" in which globalization spurs China into an economic co-development with the zonal countries for a win-win result. But given the historical "Silk Road" from which this "one way one belt" evolves, this Chinese blue print cannot be fully implemented without the accompaniment of cultural exportation. For whether it is economic development or daily consumption of goods or purport of spread of religious doctrine, it all concerns itself with "the way of life and behavior". [1] In this way culture precedes economy. Thereupon, "one way one belt" can be interpreted as double development: economy and culture. Economy is the way to help people particularly those in need out of their tight corner where culture is the belt that links and connects them all. Therefore it is necessitated that China must and will export its cultural capital while it aims to invest financially and economically abroad.

"Soft power", an antonym to "hard power", which is improvised to nickname the power other than economic and military means, may not be so plausible for its hegemonic property in globalized intercultural communication. Because culture is known to have shaped people's perceptions, attributions, judgments, and ideas of self and other, it often places people at odds one another with its specificity in the post-cinematic age. [2] Therefore cultural conflicts or differences might be a challenge to take for any culture that intends to travel from one country to another. The release and reception of the Chinese film *Wolf Warrior* (II) at home and abroad can be a platform to view the intricacy of soft power exportation.

## 2. *Wolf Warrior* (II): Achievements vs. Problems

A synopsis of *Wolf Warrior* (II) will cast light on the contrasting records of its box office home and abroad. At

home the film has swept China like a tornado and immediately become a hit while in other parts of the world it hasn't made a stir at all amidst the audience and proved almost a marketing failure.

Starring, directed and co-written by Jing Wu, *Wolf Warrior* (II) is even bigger and bolder than its predecessor (*Wolf Warrior* (I)). Jing Wu again plays the hero Feng Leng, now living a quiet life in Africa after having left the Chinese Special Forces unit under unfortunate circumstances depicted in the previous installment.

In a virtuoso opening long take, Leng stops a group of pirates from boarding his Africa-bound sea vessel. Leng is a very tough dude, as the film's rousing, and technically accomplished opening sequence attests. Soon after that, Feng Leng further proves his bona fides as a manly bro by out-drinking local Africans (you can tell that he is a real man because after pounding down beers he whips out a bottle of high-proof Chinese baiju (liquor) and keeps on chugging). Apparently beloved by all of the Africans with whom he comes into contact, even when he beats them at the drinking games, Feng Leng doesn't hesitate to get involved when the country is wracked by a civil war and invaded by a group of bloodthirsty American mercenaries led by Big Daddy (Frank Grillo). Big Daddy and his group are not immediately offensive. In fact, they're initially defined by generically stilted characterizations. But in time, Big Daddy's group introduces a largely unexamined element of good vs. bad exploitation inherent in any foreign military intervention in an unidentified African country. Big Daddy seems harmless when he assures Leng that he will "always be inferior" to "people like" Big Daddy, or even when Big Daddy speaks for the film's creators when he exclaims that he was wrong about the Chinese army's prowess. Realistically, Big Daddy is a bad guy because he's an outsider who doesn't care about the people he is casually slaughtering. In combating Big Daddy and his fellow Caucasian assassins, Feng Leng strives to rescue the noted humanitarian doctors Chen and Rachel from the evil soldiers under Big Daddy and protect the local Chinese community that is waiting to be evacuated in the war-ridden country. But the Chinese government is apparently helpless to intervene due to the internecine rules of international engagement. In the whole rescuing process Feng Leng displays a relentless series of action sequences featuring martial arts, combat, gun battles, car chases, a tank battle and pretty much anything else one can think of. And he even stops a flying grenade with a box-spring mattress, then discards the grenade so that it only destroys a nearby car.

Although the convoluted plot also involves an epidemic of a deadly disease for which the Chinese doctor is attempting to find a cure, it's basically an excuse for the star's charisma enhanced by his athletic prowess, which makes the hand-to-hand combat particularly arresting, especially a brutal brawl between him and Grillo that provides a fitting climax.

### 2.1. Achievements in Box Office at Home

The *Wolf Warrior* (II) has become a phenomenon event

since its release at the domestic market. It has broken the record of office box (430 m. yuan) for single film and single ticket and set up multifarious records such as 10-day-running record of box office (200 m. yuan), a breakthrough of total box office record of 100 m. yuan within 85 hours, the fastest breakthrough of 200 m. yuan for a single film within 167 hours in Chinese film history. And its box office reaches the totality of 5678.7 m. yuan. The success of *Wolf Warrior* (II) witnesses a miracle in Chinese film history and its entry into the top world 100 in box office.[3] *Wolf Warrior* (II) has become this year's box office phenomenon in China. On August 7, less than two weeks after its release, it overtook "The Mermaid" to become the all-time highest-grossing film at the Chinese box office and is breaking its own record every day ---- reaching 4.5 billion yuan (around \$675 million) on Sunday night.

Statistics doesn't prove all, but it certainly proves one thing: people like to pay for the film and be seated in the darkness to see it. "By adding a strong dose of wit, contemporary filmmakers have turned typical action thrillers into even great blockbuster hit, or so it seems." [4] It is common practice now that a film's success or failure is defined by its revenue, namely its profit in the market consumption. However, its success or failure in box office must be intrinsically related to its production and circulation for without the former two the consumption is impossible to occur. For instance, whether a film is popular or not largely depends on the film product including the story, narrative strategy, film language, special effect, and the development of technology. And then how a film circulates is another ineligible factor. For example, viewers may go to the cinema or they can use the internet as well as their mobile phone for screening a film. But the viewing experience and the impact on the viewers can be quite different.

### 2.2. Achievements in "Winning Viewers' Heart"

The statistical figures displayed above can serve as a piece of evidence for the film's the market success, but figures themselves don't speak for why and how a film can become so popular. To round off a thorough investigation in this regard this part is supposed to be the follow-up research of the statistical dimension. The popularity of a film may result from many factors such as simultaneous physical responses and sensual pleasures (fun chasing, desire fanning and emotion evocation) it arouses through the sensory faculties. But more often than not a film works as site of pedagogy, as bell hooks once claims. Namely film teaches and educates people while it entertains them. Therefore the film can be a textbook where people learn, exchange and meditate. The film *Wolf Warrior* (II) not only satisfies its viewers' "need to gaze" for sensual pleasures through insinuating violence such as gunfire, bombing and explosion and as well as romance along the storyline of heroism but ignites their national pride, as many Chinese scholars and critics have hailed in publications and mass media, to consolidate and fan patriotism. Why national pride and national identity? This leads up to a cursory look at the relationship between globalization and identity. It is

observed that globalization has a contradictory impact on identity. On the one hand the trend toward the unification of one world but on the other the specificity and the tendency towards the local, the cultural become more and more discernible and avowed. One of the ways to recognize this mutually conflictive yet independent identity is to understand it in relation to China's economic entry into WTO (in the year 2000) and cultural integration ever since. China's second largest economy has done ample justice to its global unification of developmental mode all over the world and the filmic representation of the heroism in *Wolf Warrior* (II) lends weight to its specificity of the local culture. Embraced by the two intertwined forces, culture is more often what a subject identifies with while economy can be a catalyst to enhance and solidify the present identity. The Chinese are known to be a civilization long but its latest modern history bears the name of "sick man of East Asia" ('dongya bingfu'). This way its then soft power doesn't mean power at all. As China's economy begins to burgeon in the booming globalization, it has more say in international co-operations and global capital market. Consequently the film *Wolf Warrior* comes out at the right point and speaks the right thing for the Chinese in the time of pluralism and equality. If identity is a biosychological need, national pride can be one of the few core labels that a people of a nation constantly identify with. The lack of such a pride in the semi-colonialist history of China in the first few decades last century eventually turned to be traumatic to the Chinese psychology. Without doubt this means without hard power as its backup, soft power is very difficult to exercise.

Then in this situation what engrosses the Chinese audience so much in the cinema so that the film becomes an almost a national hit? According to the analysis in the previous paragraph, what is accentuated is the concept power whether it is power generated via cultural mobility and constraint or power exercised through economic development. But in the film the idea of power is embodied and substantiated in the leading character named Feng Leng who travels from China to Africa and works as an envoy of cultural exchange and at the same time a warrior who is ready to put evil to justice. To name such a character in recognition, he is a hero and thus in him the audience sees heroism. Therefore it can be detected that it is largely heroism that contributes to the film's popularity among the Chinese viewers although the sensual (or rather somatic) pleasures from the screen often count.

Heroism is the quality or virtue ascribed to or nurtured in a person who displays bravery, fearlessness, courage, noble-mindedness, fortitude and generosity. In the passage of time from the antiquity to the present these qualities have become patterns of personality, the so-called archetypes by Carl Jung, which are the shared heritage of the human races. Archetypes in the collective unconsciousness amazingly impose themselves on people, but few people have ever observed their cultural, regional and even religious differences embedded in the same concept. For example, courage a concept perpetuated and eulogized in both West and East and past and present virtually has different connotations when contextualized. Feng Leng's courage and Rambo's courage

turned out to belong respectively to the Chinese and the Americans. To be particular, Feng Leng's courage is initiated by his urge to protect other people (the unnamed downtrodden local Africans and the Chinese compatriots in *Wolf Warrior*) but Rambo's to fight a battle with those who tend to harm him. Therefore it is necessary to investigate the contextualized heroism (engaged with evil forces such as violence, brutality, genocide, corruption, smuggling, underworld, invasion, and other anti-society and anti-people criminalities) so as to compare the Chinese and American audiences' likes and dislikes.

At the beginning of *Wolf Warrior* (II) Feng Leng, "a maverick soldier" [5] arrives in Africa for a kind of 'self-exile' having been dismissed from the Chinese special forces due to his accidental kill of a local bastard man who bullies the weak and blackmails the poor. But his dismissal as the background knowledge for *Wolf Warrior* (II) harbors a deed of heroism hidden to be dug out by the audience. Why is he dismissed? First, out of a sense of justice and hatred of the evil he kills the bad man at the cost of ruining his career in the army. This way he turns himself into almost a modern Robin Hood. Second, his girlfriend Xiaoyun Long in the same anti-terrorist squadron is kidnapped and said to have been killed by the international mercenaries headed by a man named Big Daddy in *Wolf Warrior* (I) and he wants to trace back the murder and avenge himself on the killer in a blood for blood way. Obviously the army disciplines do not tolerate breaches but hamper his personal revenge plan. So his dismissal from the army to certain extent can be interpreted as a kind of self-dismissal. This immediately captures the Chinese audience's curiosity because an individualistic hero is not a prevalent mode of telling stories in Chinese culture. But does it suggest a novel cultural turn in characterization of Chinese filmography? It's too early to say so but at least it signposts the on-going endeavors to change in film making in China. The opening scene unfolds a hero who launches a continental adventure single-handedly.

Heroism as such in Feng Leng at the outset is just implied but not yet explicitly depicted until his Africa-bound ship on the public sea is barricaded by a group of pirates who attempt to get aboard. At first sight nobody seems able to stop the coming hazard. Although previously little of Feng Leng's experiences of sea travel has been displayed, his athletic prowess for submarine fighting immediately stuns the audience. He looks like a nobody who has drinking games with the local Africans and becomes their buddy but proves to be a super man who can beat any evil force and conquer any difficulty. Then the whole personal revenge unfolds in an unidentified war-ravaged country, and surprisingly his revenge goes on as a very complex drama: safe guarding the two Chinese doctors from being killed by the mercenary terrorists and rescuing the Chinese factory workers being trapped by the anti-governmental rioting forces. In other words, Feng Leng is portrayed at the beginning as a hero who is said to seek his revenge on the murderers of his girlfriend, but eventually happens to devote himself to the life-rescue of his compatriots as a whole. Surprisingly his revenge, although

successfully taken, proves to be just a side kick or a coincident. Setting his feet on the African land, Feng Leng is informed that the rebel forces in the unnamed country try to assassinate a Chinese epidemic expert by the name of Doctor Chen. At this he feels no hesitation and sets out on the way to put a stop at the terrorist activities. The whole rescuing adventure is full of what have been mentioned above: fighting, bayoneting, fisting, martial arts combating, car chasing, tank ravaging and so on. So it is thrilling, haunting and horrifying and sometimes hilarious. But at the same time it is unexceptionally the embodiment and embedment of the two engaging forces between justice and evil, cruelty and kindness, beauty and ugliness. Without doubt the filmic story ends up in the triumph of the former and the defeat of the latter. Feng Leng, portrayed as an individualist who is a single-minded avenger for a personal goal at the very beginning, wipes out the evil for his country, his nation, and even the world and then expectedly puts his enemy to the deserved punishment. Naturally this film caters to the Chinese mode of thinking, aesthetics and morality. That is why they love it.

### 3. The Problems at the Foreign Market

As some Chinese film critics argue that the world has entered into the era of cinema 2.0 or post-cinema. [6] According to Francesco Casetti [7] in the age of cinema 2.0 people's cinematic experience has changed in three ways: (1) Film is no longer made in the 24-frames-per-second formula but replaced by digitalized photography; (2) The consumption of film is no longer limited to cinema but multifarious access; (3) The technology of information transmission has brought up a media-scape, which combines digital signals, internet web and mobile terminals. Casetti's understanding of cinema reiterates the tri-trajectory of cinematic studies: film making, film seeing and film circulation. Therefore it demonstrates what all together contribute to a film's achievements. In other words no single reason can account for the success of the film at home and its cold reception abroad but three. However, due to the limit of space and time, my examination has to narrow down to certain area or factor, for which I decide to look at film seeing (what appeals most to audience and engages their attention.) In my understanding, whatever changes take place of cinema, story is the backbone of a film. All blockbusters are a story. A story is a narrative which is said to have three key elements: place, time and event. My observation of the problems with the film *Wolf Warrior* (II) is conducted along the tripartite narrative component.

"Films produced according to the Hollywood standard, then, are doubly involved in drawing our attention away from their origins in material, technology, industry, and labor. They do so at their most elemental and technological level and in their further dominant function of showing and telling seamless stories. To absorb spectators in the film narratives that are the major commodities produced under the Hollywood standard, most feature films disguise not only the operation of their technology, but also the constructed nature of their narratives. Our spectator's attention is diverted away from the fact that the

story is shaped through the materials of the medium, and that the events and characters we see and the way we see them could be other than they naturally appear to us. According to the Hollywood standard, the primary pleasure of narrative is its capacity to absorb us." [8] There is no denying that *Wolf Warrior* (II), as I have discussed above, "show and tell seamless stories" by "drawing our attention away from their origins in material, technology, industry and labor" with the Chinese mythology of heroism. In style its hero even features the American Rambo type. But the "seamless stories" may otherwise appear "full of seams" if the adaption fails to satisfy the Western film goers although "Chinese filmmakers yearn to explore domestic and international markets." [9] In the following part I will try to analyze how and why such a narrative may possibly lose its magic power to audiences abroad by looking at the so called three narrative essentials: place, time and event.

#### 3.1. Place

In the traditional way place is easy to recognize and define. It is therefore the locale where one appears for activity (presence). The advent of modernity increasingly tears away from place by fostering relations between 'absent' others, locationally distant from any given situation of face-to-face interaction. In conditions of modernity, place becomes increasingly *phantasmagoric*: that is to say, locales are thoroughly penetrated and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them. [10] Although Giddens acknowledges the changing nature of relationships between places and inside places as well. He sees places becoming 'phantasmagoric', which can mean 'a shifting series or succession of phantasms or imaginary figures, as seen in a dream or fevered condition, as called up by the imagination, or as created by literary description'. From the tradition to a modern concept, 'place' seems to have undergone a subtle change that people seldom notice or have trouble, having noticed, in understanding. To further investigate this issue I discover that the traditional way of looking at 'place' is a somatic experience (namely the position marked by the presence of a human body) whereas the modernist definition is largely a mental or psychological experience of 'place' where the human body might be absent. This means that people who live in a media society unwittingly blur the differences between the lived world and the copied or imitated world such as a filmed community. "Everyday life brings us into constant visual encounter with people, animals and objects in spatial and temporal movement. This movement is initiated by the viewed objects themselves, and by us as we shift the attention of our gaze or physically move our bodies in relation to them. In its most familiar forms, the cinema seems to provide us with similar visual experience of the world. Thus we often take cinematic vision as much for granted as we take our own." [8] It can be seen that the Sobchacks insist the reason why people don't try to differentiate the two worlds is because "To a great degree, we forget that the images we see projected on the screen are not directly and *immediately* our own, but are indirectly given to us to see – first *mediated* by the combined mechanical and

human vision of others.” [8] What the Sobchacks say is true of the traditional cinema where the film viewers who, sitting in the dark, quiet house equipped with cushion chairs and super sound stereo, may be overwhelmed by an illusion created by such cinematic conditions and thus forget about the real world outside the screen. But in the contemporary digitalized world film circulates through a multi-channel: handset, laptop, internet, TV, computer apart from cinema. What results from this is the fact that instead of forgetting about the real world film viewers may be fully aware of the act of film seeing in the real world but still indulge themselves in it. Therefore the changed cinematic conditions in a media driven society have to be re-examined and re-interpreted from the angle of mass communication. As semioticians believe, human beings live in a world composed of things and signs the two of which intertwine and interplay in the formation of social bond and cultural value. Edward Said's interpretation of the geographical relationships between Occident and Orient helps to illuminate this pair of mutual conflictive and yet interdependent concepts: “For there is no doubt that imaginative geography and history help the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away.” [11] With this he intends to inform that “[So] space acquires emotional and even rational sense by a kind of poetic process, whereby the vacant or anonymous reaches of distance are converted into meaning for us here.” [11] Up till now we understand that the so called objective reality (for example, ‘place’) we human beings perpetuate is nothing but a subjective understanding of it through signs (mostly language). To respond back to the traditional and modernist different interpretations of ‘place’ we realize that the traditional approach emphasizes the physical or material dimension of the world we live in while the modernists give rise to its representational aspect as well as the psychological and mental signification. Now enough is said about the concept of place and on the basis of that we seem to be able to understand why foreign/American viewers don't have a liking for the film.

When the place the unidentified African country serves as a site where the war affair breaks out, not only the unidentified country or even Africa as a continent has in turn become a “phantasmagoric” place. Then how does Africa, though it is never geographically dislodged, form relationships with other continents? For instance, Americas, Europe, Asia; how is it economically globalized? For example, in what way and for whose benefit? Certainly Africa does not exist because it is a geographical landscape but because it is a place that nurtures its people and its culture, all of which, due to historical reasons, has knowingly been interpreted and defined by colonial and imperialistic discourses. When globalization gets China involved in its recent economic development and cultural exchange, the conceptualization of “place” has inevitably injected some Chinese element (s) into Africa. In other words, when the Chinese arrive in Africa as new comers, not really the settlement of the local community will be disarrayed but the hierarchical order and balance of power structure

established by the hegemonic culture and preoccupied knowledge is being disavowed. For example, dry climate, famine, poverty and natural calamities often feature the African continent although oasis, rivers and other water systems do teem some parts of it. The moment Leng Feng steps onto the soil of Africa the audience is provided with a quite different view of bustling Africans on the streets and a green muddy landscape that seem to be full of vitality and energy. What's more, Feng Leng turns the land under his feet into a venue where he displays his martial prowess and intelligence to beat the evil. Africa since its antiquity is a continent that almost remains intact. Except those who frequent this place like Americans and Europeans, it is a very conspicuous behavior for those who seldom or never go there but suddenly appear. China's expedition on the international waters and its economic aid to Africa is not merely body movement in the space but operates as signs that actually rewrite the geographical awareness of Africa and, more importantly, remake the world map in the symbolic order. The potential risk it poses is that the world balance in different regions created by world powers might be destabilized.

The tentative conclusion to be drawn from the above analysis is that China's presence in Africa seems to have replaced or threatened both economically and discursively someone who historically and ideologically has occupied Africa long. Africa is not only economically remote area but culturally the peripheral continent.

### 3.2. Time

“Many art forms produce their meaning in time and through duration: dance is movement in time, music is sound in time, drama and prose fiction are actions in time. The moving image in film is an image in time, and - unlike the experience of looking at painting and sculpture - the experience of viewing a film requires the viewer to be in some way aware of the flow of time. This flow of time, however, is not a simple thing, for there are several different kinds of time in the cinema.” [8] The experienced time and the real time are such examples. In the times of digitalization is “time” still distinguished by the above-mentioned ways? In other words, do film goers merge the fictional time with the real time? Maybe prior to modernization the two never partake of each other but in the age of digitalization the boundaries between them are blurred or overlapped. Here are some observations over the conceptualization of time in the age of globalization. Globalization unifies the global time. Whatever happens over the globe, it reaches every corner of the world in second. In this way the regional time difference can be erased in communication but only the sunrise and sunset still mark the rotation of the day and the night; With the invasion of digitalization and internet technology, people now live at least in two real worlds: hyperreal (virtual) world and material world. Life as such is a travel or interaction between the two. To put it another way, the fictional time and real time intertwine and people cannot and sometimes don't (want to) tell them apart. Therefore people's conceptualization of time is a blended and merged one. The fictional time or time in the

virtual world penetrates the so called real and material world. With regard to the time involved in the filmed event of *Wolf Warrior*, the story time and the time off the screen in the outside world coincide. Namely what happens in the film may be exactly what happens in the world. Due to this time cross-border phenomenon, viewers may treat the time of rescue in the film as time to rescue the downtrodden people over the globe. Digitalization squeezes time not only synchronically but also diachronically. The east and the west can meet at any given moment in a cyber society, so do the past and the present and the future. Except in the cinema, illusionism disappears in other venues of film seeing. Seeing a film thereafter is a present need. That is, film seeing through other means such as internet, handset, laptop, ipad, etc than cinema itself comes from the present need of the viewers. For instance, the need to study history, to understand politics, to learn a community and to seek pleasure can all be satisfied by seeing a film. The story time in the film *Wolf Warrior* parallels with time in the on-going real world: the advancement of the “one way one belt”, the navy stationed in the Djibouti Port in east Africa, business friction and cooperation with other countries that all keep pace with the film time. Since time, like space, is an intrinsic nature of human life, it is what people most often wrestle with. It is therefore internalized and at the same time interpreted diachronically and synchronically. As a thinking subject one often looks at oneself in relation to one’s contemporary others and in relation to one’s ancestors and descendants as well. In this way one gains a full picture of oneself in the time dimension. When *Wolf Warrior* (II) appears on the West screen, one can imagine it evokes their emotions, sentiments and memories along the axis of past, present and future. It is known that it is differences rather than similarities that mark off the east from the West and the relationship between the West and China is historically more conflictive than cooperative. That the conceptualization of a Chinese heroism meets up more resistance or antagonism than plausibility in the world market is not surprising. But what may be panicky to the film producers is that their dream to hit the world film market doesn’t come true. Time should be one of the major factors to account for it.

### 3.3. Event

‘Event’, according to the O. E. dictionary, is defined as “something usually important that happens”. An event as something usually important that happens features several things in signification. First, it’s the experiential knowledge whether it is an ‘event’ in the so called objective reality or the subjective reality; second, event as such is of spatiality and temporality and more importantly its signification depends on a subject who judges it. Third, an objective event which occurs in the objective reality has the nature of ‘presence’ (prior to human experiential knowledge) while a subjective event, an antithetical term to objective reality, is the experienced one that is either fictionalized or reported. But with regard to the event (s) in feature films, no objective event in its true sense is meant although cognitively the objective reality always plays a decisive role in understanding the subjective ones. [12] So in

film when an event is constructed by film directors it proceeds along its temporality and spatiality. But when it is understood and interpreted by audience it makes sense at three levels according to narratology: event, plot and story, the relationship of which can be demonstrated by the following diagram (figure 1) The diagram maps the interplay of the narrative trinity in interpreting a feature. Event is obviously the base of the other two for both of the other two revolve around it. Plot must contain event because plot is the explicit presentation of (an) event which is embellished with nondiegetic (irrelevant) material for the purpose of attracting the audience. And then story also contain event only upon which can viewers or readers infer events that are relevant but not perceptibly present in plot. For instance the event that Feng Leng in *Wolf Warrior* (II) fights the pirates on the sea may be very imaginable to the Westerners in the way that China emerges as a naval power and it may potentially challenge other established world powers. Therefore when an event in a narrative such as the film is experienced by a viewer, the experience starts with a plot, which is exactly how an event is presented through semiotics. However if one just stays at the plot level without going further to observe what associations an event may arouse in the mind of a film viewer, one just stops at what is said but not what is meant. To make it more intelligible with Barthes’ exemplification, when one sees the filmed plot, as one sees the saluting black soldier in front of a French national flag, one will certainly continue to dig out what this given plot intends to say, as one cannot help thinking that the salutation to the French national flag means a soldier’s patriotism and loyalty to his country. In this way one not only experiences the ‘explicitly presented events’ but also the ‘inferred events’(figure 1) and thus one makes up a story for oneself. To differentiate the three for a purposive sum-up, event is something that happens in the real world and a plot is a report of that real event in literary or cultural works whereas a story is the understanding of the plot plus more information or events not present in plot but inferred in a reader’s or a viewer’s mind. On the basis of the analysis of the narrative trinity what remains to be done is to explore what film goes may infer from the explicitly presented events in *Wolf Warrior* (II).

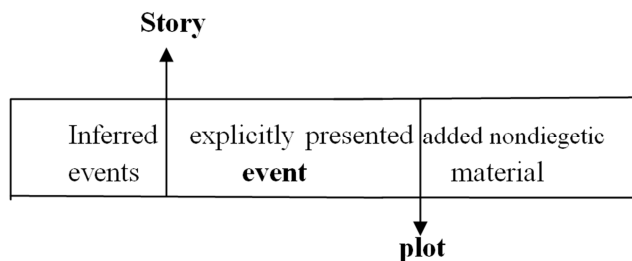


Figure 1. A diagram of the “narrative trinity”.

According to the diagram (figure 1), as I have analyzed above, an event in a narrative doesn’t really make sense unless it is turned into a story by a reader or a viewer. In signification an event is just a starter for a splendid meal whose substantial cuisine largely consists in the inferred events. Given the

previous synopsis, it's not difficult to work out how many events are explicitly presented in the film *Wolf Warrior* (II) and what they are. The beginning event should be Leng Feng's African travel within which another event of fighting-pirate occurs. The next two dominant and eye-catching events that parallel with each other are the rescuing event (rescuing Chinese medical workers from the mercenaries and the factory workers from the anti-government forces) and the event of chasing Big Daddy. So in all there are generally four events I have personally identified in this film in order to conduct the related research, but my purpose of dividing events in such a way does not mean to deny other possibilities of division but makes simple and direct my analysis of inferred events.

'Inferred events' must be related to many factors, for instance, the definition of event, the one who defines it and his or her life experience, level of literacy, educational background, and so on. So to make it manageable and analyzable I would approach it from my point of view as a film goer and I will try to trace the events according to the time line. But I realize that the risk I take in trying to air my opinions and viewpoints is that my understanding and experience of these events are unavoidably personal and sometimes even biased and the exemplification sometimes may fail to be representative of what a general viewer expects it to mean. Nevertheless the risk is worthy to be tried because through my illustration and elaboration I shall demonstrate how a film goer get engaged with the film screen and how their emotions and feelings are evoked and thus display their likes and dislikes and love and hatred.

Let's first look at the African travel. In Chinese history there are three what can be called nation-based travels. The earliest one is Zhangqian in the Han Dynasty, the second one is the religious travel by the Chinese monk Xuan Zhuang in the Tang Dynasty; and the third one is done by Zhenghe in the Ming Dynasty. Although different travels in time for different purposes, the three travels share a lot in common and can somehow help review the filmed African travel. For the convenience of discussion I shall number the three historical travels as first, second and third, each of which features respectively diplomatic, religious and political missions. The first diplomatic travel in the Han Dynasty aims to form an alliance with the then Dayue Kingdom to resist or defeat the Huns' ceaseless invasion on the northern borderline; The second religious travel to Xiyv (India) aims to resolve the doctrinal controversy among the Buddhist believers in China; The third political or economic travel occurs in the early Ming Dynasty the emperor of which is said to hunt or wipe out its political rivals abroad in the name of cultural exchange. Whatever motivation each of the three travels has, that the Chinese nation under the emperor wanted to develop and change the economic status quo of the country is obvious. And the result of all the three national travels is surprisingly well known at home and abroad. Each of the dynasty experienced a prosperity of economy and culture. Therefore the open door policy has ever since been a golden principle for a golden age. This immediately brings a lot of hint and clues to the understanding of the filmed African travel to many of the

Chinese as well as foreigner viewers. Apart from its spatial and temporal significance as well as geopolitical implications discussed above, the Africa bound journey is telling the world about the Chinese stories of their determination to be the world leaders and eventually the plan (one way one belt) is going to make it come true. To cut short my analysis, when an event is presented on film screen, it certainly catches the eyeball of the audience one way or another. "Film is a particularly sensual medium with the capacity to affect spectators in direct ways through the perceptual qualities of images and sounds. Moods, emotions, and various automatic body responses make up the affective dimension of film" [13] The consequence accordingly is that everyone produces a story of and for oneself in the mind. And this consequently may set off likes and dislikes beyond the aesthetic scope. Seeing the Chinese emerging as awaking lion, as Napoleon once said, do those in the neighborhood feel safe and secure and can still live at ease? Especially those who are potential rivals with China in the economic market and military arena?

## 4. Conclusion

So hero, event, time and place all together make a modern Chinese epic and Leng Feng is the Chinese Odysseus. In the situation of globalization the exportation of so called soft power or cultural soft power [14] is first a matter of commodification. And the cultural commodity in the form of film must try to appeal to the audience consumption need which can be diverse and different. Second, whether a film is welcome or not (indicated by box office) largely depends on the film director's techniques to tell stories (e.g. heroism via the narrative trinity: event, plot and story as in *Wolf Warrior* (II)) to the audience. Third, what backs up the exportation of soft power in the long run is a country's hard power, namely its economic development. Fourth, to essentialize the whole case of exportation of soft power, it is the sale and promotion of cultural values to the importers, which is perpetuated as state strategy in globalization [15]. Has the Hollywood studio proved this?

## References

- [1] Zheng, Xiangfu (2018). "Global Hegemony and the Self-Strong Chinese Culture". *Journal of Zhejiang Social Sciences*, issue3.
- [2] Yu, Changmin (2018). "Who is Afraid of Post-Cinematic Studies." *Film Art*, issue 4.
- [3] Chu, Jinyong (2018). "'Confessed Anxiety': the Global Promotion of Chinese Film from the Cold Reception of *Wolf Warrior* (II) Abroad. *Journal of Film Review*, issue 12.
- [4] King, Cynthia M. (2000). "Effects of Humorous Heroes and Villains in Violent Action Films". *Journal of Communication*, 50 (1).
- [5] Wu, Haiyun. "How Blockbuster War Movies Capture China's Changing Nationalism" from 'http://www.sixthtone.com/users/29324/wu-haiyun'.

- [6] Han, Xiaoqiang (2018). "Cinematic Experience in the Age of Cinema 2.0". Film Art, issue 4.
- [7] Cassetti, Francesco. Eye of the Century: Film, Experience, Modernity. Trans. Erin Larkin with Jennifer. NY, U. 2008, p188.
- [8] Sobchack, Thomas and Vivian C. Sobchack. An Introduction to Film. Library of Congress Catalog-in-Publication Data, 1978, p7-8, p55, p112.
- [9] Yang, Jing and Xiaotian Jin (2019). "Imagining Globalization in a Chinese Chick Flick." Literature/Film Quarterly. Vol. 47, No. 1.
- [10] Giddens, Anthony. The Consequence of Modernity. Polity Press, 2012, p18-19.
- [11] Said, Edward. Orientalism. Middlesex: Pantheon Books. 1995, p54.
- [12] Leilei Jia (1992). The Meaning of the Embedded Reality in Unreality. Film Art. Issu 5.
- [13] Plantinga, Carl. "The Affective Power of Movies" in Arthur P. Shimamura (ed.). Psychocinematics: Exploring Cognition at the Movies. Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: May-13, 2013.
- [14] Tan, Meiling (2018). "'Wolf WarriorsII': A Research on the Strategy of Improving China's Cultural Soft Power". Yinshan Academic Journal, issue 2.
- [15] Xu, Fangming and Wang, Sha (2018). "The Narrative of New Heroes and the Construction of State Image". Yuejiang Academic Journal, issue 6.