



Chinese Mainland Research on the New Century Historical Figures Documentary and Cultural Narrative

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Citation: Chen, Z. & Liu, E. (2024). Chinese Mainland Research on the New Century Historical Figures Documentary and Cultural Narrative. *Herança*, 7(2), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.52152/heranca.v7i2.872>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 10 Aug 2023

Accepted: 30 Oct 2023

ABSTRACT

Documentary of historical figures in the new century is a vital form of visual and cultural expression, capturing the lives and contributions of notable figures in Chinese history. These documentaries play a crucial role in the cultural narrative by providing audiences with a profound insight into Chinese history and culture. They stimulate critical thinking and discussions on historical truth, values, and moral ethics. This study explores the developmental trajectory of historical figure documentaries in the 21st century, their connection to cultural traditions, and the dynamic interplay between the two. It sheds light on the impact of these documentaries on the evolution of modern Chinese society and culture, offering valuable insights for documentary production, cultural narrative studies, and visual culture research. This research contributes to a broader understanding of Chinese history and culture, emphasizing the role of historical figure documentaries in shaping the cultural narrative of contemporary China and preserving historical knowledge.

Keywords: Documentary; Cultural Narrative; Historical Figures; Chinese Culture.

INTRODUCTION

China, as a country with rich history and cultural traditions, has a longstanding tradition of narrative, from ancient poems and dramas to modern novels and films. This cultural heritage has always revolved around storytelling, encapsulating the wisdom and emotions of thousands of years (Wagner, 2023; Y. Lu, 2022; W. Zhao, 2022). In the new century, the progress of time has infused documentaries on historical figures with renewed vitality and significance, injecting new life into this age-old tradition. These documentaries serve not only as historical records but also as a medium for expressing a cultural narrative that seamlessly intertwines history and culture (Lee, 2019).

This research undertakes the task of defining and categorizing historical figure documentaries from the 21st century, delving into their commonalities and distinctions in comparison to other documentary genres. The focal point of this exploration lies in the historical figure documentaries of the 21st century, with an emphasis on three essential dimensions: the evolution of these documentaries in terms of their production, reception, and societal impact within mainland China. The study also dives deep into the cultural storytelling traditions prevalent in mainland China, unraveling the intricate connection between historical figures and cultural narratives. This involves an investigation into how narrative techniques and cultural elements are harnessed to authentically depict Chinese history and culture.

From an empirical perspective, this study scrutinizes prominent and influential works in historical figure documentaries from the 21st century. Notable figures like Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, and Zhou Enlai are examined to unveil distinctive features and innovative approaches in theme selection, content presentation, audio-visual techniques, and language usage.

The primary objective of this research is to systematically uncover the pivotal role and impact of historical figure documentaries in mainland Chinese society. These documentaries not only serve as a means to document and showcase Chinese history and culture but also represent a subjective avenue to shape and propagate these historical and cultural narratives. They effectively engage the audience's curiosity and affinity with Chinese history and culture by offering a multifaceted and multi-level portrayal of historical figures. Historical figure documentaries from the new century play a vital cultural narrative function, constituting an essential part of the Chinese mainland's cultural narrative tradition. They are instrumental in preserving, interpreting, and promoting the rich history and culture of China.

DOCUMENTARY AND CULTURAL NARRATIVE OF NEW CENTURY HISTORICAL FIGURES IN MAINLAND CHINA

Development Course of the Documentary on Historical Figures in New Century

Since the new century, historical figure documentary, as an essential form of cultural narrative, has shown a vigorous development trend in the Chinese mainland (S. Chen, 2021; Yang, 2021; Lian, 2022). From theme selection, production method, audience response, social influence, and so on, the development process of documentaries of historical figures since the new century can be sorted into four stages, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Development Course of Documentary on Historical Figures in the New Century

Initial period (2000-2005): This stage is the germination and exploration stage of documentaries on historical figures since the new century, mainly featuring political leaders and revolutionary pioneers, such as Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, etc. Most of these documentaries are produced by CCTV or other official organizations and have a solid political color and positive evaluation, aiming to promote the national spirit and socialist values. These documentaries have reached a high production level and audience scale, laying a foundation for the subsequent development.

Development Period (2006 to 2010): This stage is the stage of diversification and refinement of documentaries of historical figures since the new century. The theme involves various fields, such as cultural celebrities, scientists, military strategists, and business people, such as Lu Xun, Qian Xuesen, Peng Dehuai, Wang Yongqing, etc. These documentaries, produced mainly by civil society groups or individuals, have high creativity and openness and aim to explore the versatility and complexity of historical figures. These documentaries have made breakthroughs in the depth of content and form innovation, providing impetus for the subsequent transformation.

Transition period (2011 to 2015): This is the cross-border and internationalization stage of documentaries on historical figures since the new century. The theme begins to span time, space, and national boundaries, involving various forms of foreign figures, ancient figures, fictional figures, and other forms, such as Steve Jobs, Confucius, Romance of The Three Kingdoms, etc. Most of these documentaries are made of transnational cooperation or cross-media integration. They have a solid international vision and cultural exchange significance, aiming to show the universality and diversity of historical figures. These documentaries contribute to vision expansion and cultural dialogue, allowing for subsequent innovation.

Innovation period (2016 to 2020): This stage is the in-depth reflection of historical figures since the new century. The theme begins to dig deeply and reflect deeply, involving various perspectives such as marginal, controversial, and unknown figures, such as Li Ao, The Death of Mao Zedong, Looking for Lin Zhao, etc. Most of these documentaries independently produced or on online platforms, are highly critical and reflective and aim to reveal the authenticity and sensitivity of historical figures. These documentaries have challenges in pursuing truth and values, opening up new possibilities for subsequent development. Table 1 shows the detailed data table of the development course of the documentary of historical figures in the new century.

Table 1. Data Sheet of the Development Course of Documentaries of Historical Figures Since New Century

Stage	Time Period	Number of Online Documentaries	Number of TV Documentaries	Award Success Rate	Main Themes
Initiation	2000-2005	151	782	40%	Political Leaders and Revolutionaries
Development	2006-2010	451	1122	25%	Cultural Figures, Scientists, Military Leaders, Business Icons, etc.
Transition	2011-2015	871	1562	20%	Foreign Figures, Historical Figures, Fictional Characters, etc.
Innovation	2016-2020	1711	2212	15%	Marginal Figures, Controversial Figures, Unknown Figures, etc.

A Historical Overview of the Fusion of Classical and Popular Music

Documentary is a kind of audio-visual media based on reality and recording, explaining and expressing human society and natural phenomena through image language (Jin, 2022; W. Lu & Li, 2022; Becard & Menechelli Filho, 2019 Zhu, 2023; López Lerma, 2022). Documentaries serve as more than just a medium for sharing information; they encompass a process of cultural expression. They mirror their creators' values, thought patterns, and aesthetic inclinations while also influencing the audience's perception, emotions, and actions. As a result, the crafting and reception of documentaries encompass cultural activities intertwined with cultural contexts, traditions, divergences, and exchanges.

Chinese Mainland As a country with a long history and rich culture, its documentary creation also has its unique cultural narrative tradition. This tradition is not only influenced by the history and culture of the Chinese nation but also related to the changes in Chinese mainland social politics. In general, the cultural narrative tradition of Chinese mainland documentaries can be divided into four stages, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Four Stages of Chinese Documentary Culture Narrative Tradition

In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China (1949-1966): This stage is the beginning and development stage of Chinese mainland documentaries, mainly to publicize the achievements of the construction of new China and socialist thought, such as "The Founding Ceremony," "How the Steel was Tempered," "Ode to the Motherland" and so on. Most of these documentaries are produced by the Central News Documentary Film Studio or other official organizations. They have a solid political orientation and educational function, aiming to shape the national image and identity.

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976): This stage is the stagnation and decline stage of Chinese mainland documentaries, mainly supporting MAO Zedong thought and the proletarian Cultural Revolution as the theme, such as "Chairman MAO in Jiangxi," "MAO Zedong Thought shine forever," "The Great cause" and so on. Most of these documentaries are produced by the Central News Documentary Film Studio or other official organizations and have solid political tendencies and personality cult color, aiming to maintain political authority and ideology.

Reform and opening up (1978 to 2000): This stage is the stage of recovery and innovation of Chinese mainland documentaries. The theme begins to diversify and open, involving social changes, people's livelihood issues, history and culture, and other fields, such as River War, Rural China, Rural China, Long March, etc. These documentaries, produced mainly by civil society groups or individuals, are highly creative and exploratory, aiming to reflect the social reality and the historical truth.

Since the beginning of the new century (from 2000 to the present), this stage has been the diversification and internationalization of Chinese mainland documentaries. The theme begins to span time and space and national boundaries, involving natural ecology, biographies, ethnic customs, and other forms, such as "A Bite of China," "Witness," and "Dialogue through Time and Space." Most of these documentaries are made up of transnational cooperation or cross-media integration. They have a solid international vision and cultural exchange significance and aim to show the diversity and charm of China (Chau, 2022).

Relationship Between Documentaries and Cultural Narrative

Documentary of old historical characters is a kind of documentary type with historical characters as the theme, showing the life, thought, achievements, and influence of historical characters, as well as their historical background, through video, sound, text, and other cultural environment (Marchetti, 2021). Documentary of historical figures is an objective record of historical events and a subjective interpretation and expression of history and culture, reflecting the traditional characteristics and modern innovation of Chinese mainland cultural narrative.

Cultural narrative is an activity that organizes, interprets, and disseminates cultural phenomena through language, symbols, images, and other media. It reflects the producers' values, thinking mode, and aesthetic orientation and also affects the audience's cognition, emotion, and behavior (Yang, 2023). Cultural narrative has its fixed form and norms, flexible changes, and innovation.

As shown in Figure 3, there are three links between documentaries of historical characters and cultural narratives.

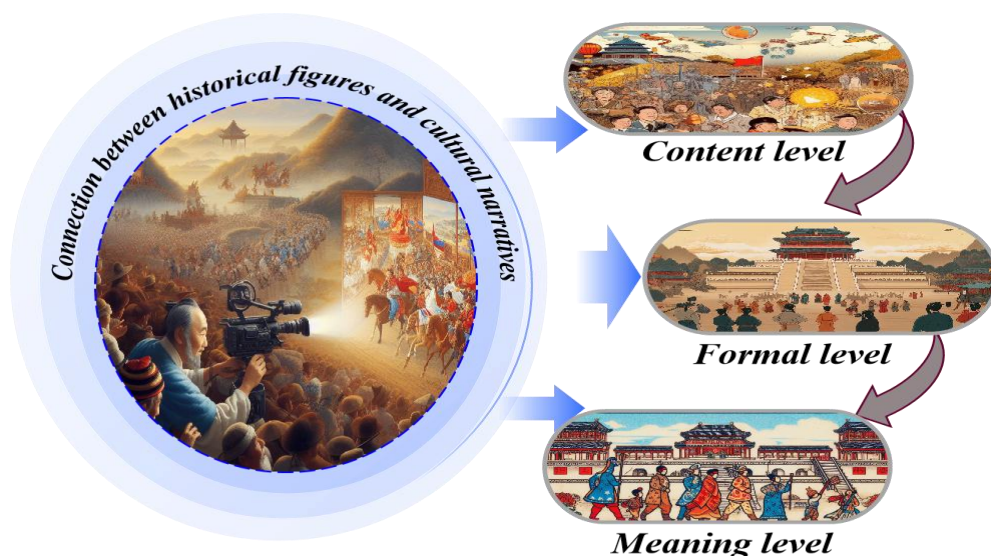


Figure 3. Link Between Historical Figure Documentary and Cultural Narrative

Content level: The content selection of historical figures documentaries reflects the producers' attention to and orientation of history and culture, as well as the needs and trends of the society and The Times. Since the beginning of the new century, the content of documentaries on historical figures has begun to be diversified and refined, involving political leaders, cultural celebrities, scientists, military strategists, business people, and other fields. It also begins to span time, space, and national boundaries, involving foreign figures, ancient figures, fictional figures, and other forms. The selection of these contents not only reflects the Chinese mainland's promotion and inheritance of national spirit and socialist values but also reflects the Chinese mainland's openness and communication for multiculturalism and international vision.

Formal level: The choice of form of historical figures documentary reflects the producer's use and mastery of image language and narrative skills and also reflects the audience's preference and changes for audio-visual enjoyment and cognitive mode (Rong & Wei, 2023; X. Tian, 2020; Cao, 2022; Zhou, 2022; Sun & Yang, 2020). Since the new century, the form of documentaries of historical figures has begun to innovate and change, using advanced image technology and multimedia means, such as scene reproduction, animation production, virtual reality, and so on, enhance the realism and immersion of multiple information sources and expressions, such as audio and video files, oral interviews, expert comments, commentary, enhance the richness and authority of the historical information; the multi-line structure arrangement and rhythm control, such as parallel expansion, enhance the tension and attraction of the historical story.

Significance level: The meaning construction of historical figures documentary reflects the producer's understanding and interpretation of history and culture and the audience's perception and inspiration for history and culture. Since the beginning of the new century, documentaries of historical figures have pursued objectivity and professionalism in presenting historical facts and pursue subjectivity and creativity in displaying historical significance. Exploring the diversity and complexity of historical figures, the documentary reveals their humanity and universality, triggers the emotional resonance and value identification of the audience, reveals the authenticity and sensitivity of historical figures, challenges their myth and authority, triggers the critical thinking and reflection consciousness, shows the universality and diversity, shows their cultural influence and international contribution, and arouses the audience's cultural confidence and openness. Table 2 presents a detailed data table of the relationship between documentaries and cultural narratives of historical characters since the new century.

Table 2. Relationship Between Historical Figures' Documentaries and Cultural Narrative

Historical Documentary	Cultural Narrative Content	Online Viewership (Billions)	TV Viewership (%)
"The History of China"	Focus on the Chinese path	4.2	0.216
"The Hexi Corridor"	Geographical exploration of the Hexi Corridor	1.8	0.152
"China"	Regional exploration of China	3.6	0.189
"If National Treasures Could Speak"	Main focus on national treasures and artifacts	5.4	0.814
"They Will Never Grow Old"	Set against the backdrop of World War I	2.7	0.321

CLASSIFICATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW CENTURY HISTORICAL FIGURES IN MAINLAND CHINA

Types and Characteristics of Documentaries

Documentary is a kind of film and television form that takes actual historical events and characters as the material and shows real life through images and voices (H. Zhang, 2020). Since the beginning of the new century, with the development of science and technology and the change in society, documentaries of historical figures also present diversified types and characteristics.

Table 3. Types and Characteristics of Documentaries on Historical Figures in the New Century

Type	Characteristics	Representative Works
Biography	Biography of one or more historical figures	"Mao Zedong" "Deng Xiaoping" "Masters of the Century"
Thematic	Exploration of one or more historical themes	"The History of China" "Modern Chinese History" "Southwest Associated University"

Type	Characteristics	Representative Works
Narrative	Dramatic representation of historical events	"The Long March" "The Nanking Massacre" "Naval Academy"
Hybrid	Comprehensive and blended approach	"40 Years of China's Reform and Opening Up" "The Centennial of the Chinese Communist Party" "From Qin Shihuang to Emperor Wu of Han"

Table 3 shows historical figures' documentary types and characteristics in the new century. Documentaries on historical figures in the new century can be divided into four types: biographical, thematic, story, and mixed. The documentary of historical figures in the new century not only innovates in type but also makes breakthroughs in expression techniques and techniques, which makes the documentary of historical figures more vivid and charming.

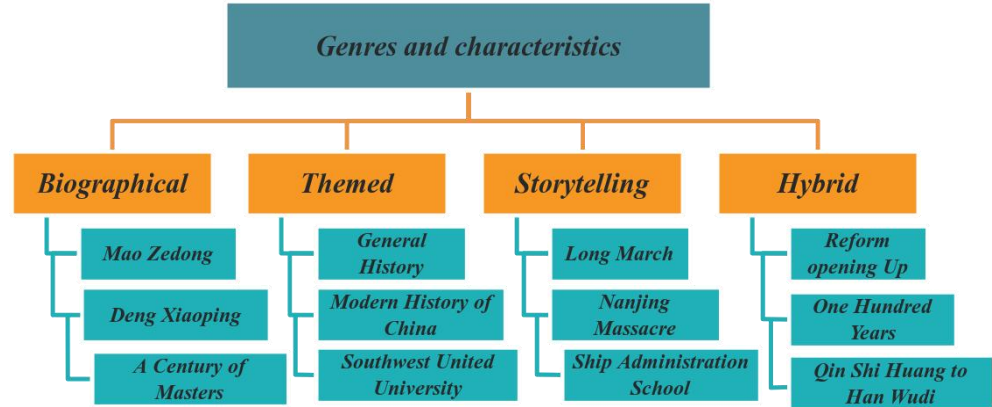


Figure 4. Types and Characteristics of Documentaries of Historical Figures in the New Century

Figure 4 shows the detailed structure diagram of the documentary types and characteristics of the historical figures in the new century. The documentary of historical figures in the new century is a form of film and television full of vitality and creativity. It provides a window to understand history and characters and inspires the thinking of history and the enlightenment of characters. Documentary on historical figures in the new century is a cultural product worthy of attention and appreciation (Ai & Guo, 2022, You, 2022; Wang & Mihelj, 2019; Fan, 2022). For example, the Rise of the Great Powers documentary series uses a lot of 3D animation and special effects technology to present historical scenes and details that could not be presented directly in the past. The documentary series General History of China adopts a cross-time interview method, inviting well-known scholars and experts from different ages and countries to talk and communicate with historical figures, which increases the interest and interactivity of historical figures documentaries. The documentary of historical figures in the new century also focuses on the multi-angle and multi-level analysis of historical figures, which shows their achievements and influence and reveals their thoughts and emotions so that the audience can have a deeper understanding of the inner world of historical figures. For example, the documentary series shows their creativity, wisdom, character, and feelings through an in-depth visit to several outstanding people who have made outstanding achievements in science, literature, and art since modern times.

Theme and Content of the Documentary

The documentary of historical figures in the new century is a kind of film and television form that takes actual historical events and figures as the material and shows real life through images and voices. Since the beginning of the new century, with the development of science and technology and the change in society, documentaries of historical figures also present diversified themes and contents (Cheng & Yueh, 2023).

Political theme: The political theme is an essential aspect of the documentary of historical figures, involving the national construction, development, change, crisis, and other aspects, as well as the roles, contributions, decision-making, challenges, and other aspects of the related historical figures. Documentaries on historical figures with political themes are usually solid, contemporary, and realistic, reflecting a country or region's political status and social outlook in different historical stages. For example, the documentary series "A Century of the Communist Party of China" shows the great practice of the CPC from its founding to the present, showing the CPC leading the Chinese people in revolution, construction, and reform, as well as the status and role of the CPC on the international stage. The documentary series From Emperor Qin Shihuang to Emperor Wudi of the Han Dynasty

analyzes the life and political activities of the two pioneering emperors of Emperor Qin Shihuang and discusses their influence and contribution to Chinese history and culture.

Cultural theme: Cultural theme is an essential aspect of the documentary on historical figures, involving literature, art, science, education, thought, and other aspects, as well as the creation, achievements, thoughts, style, and other aspects of related historical figures. Documentaries of historical figures with cultural themes are usually robust, educational, and inspiring, reflecting the cultural characteristics and spiritual temperament of a country or a region in different historical periods. For example, the documentary series shows their creativity, wisdom, character, and feelings through an in-depth visit to several outstanding people who have made outstanding achievements in science, literature, and art since modern times. Through a review of the history and stories of Southwest Associated University, a legendary institution of higher learning, the series of documentary films shows that Southwest Associated University has trained a group of outstanding talents and elites for the Chinese nation during the Anti-Japanese War.

Social theme: The social theme is an essential aspect of the documentary of historical figures, involving economic, military, sports, people's livelihood, and other aspects, as well as the contributions, challenges, difficulties, struggles, and other aspects of related historical figures. Documentaries of historical figures with social themes usually have strong appeal and shock power, reflecting the social changes and people's lives in a country or a region under different historical environments. For example, the documentary series "Rise of Great Powers" shows China's historical process from backwardness to rise in modern economic, military, and diplomatic developments and achievements and displays China's status and influence on the world stage. The Long March series shows the heroic struggle and indomitable spirit of the Communist Party of the Chinese Party and the Chinese people through the reappearance of the historical events of the Red Army of the Chinese Workers and peasants.

Documentary Production and Directing Style

The documentary of historical figures in the new century is a kind of film and television form that takes actual historical events and figures as the material and shows real life through images and voices. Since the beginning of the new century, with the development of science and technology and the change of society, documentaries of historical figures have also presented a diversified production and directing style (Fung, Gong, Ngo, & Isaacowitz, 2019).

Table 4. Types and Characteristics of Documentaries on Historical Figures in the New Century

Production and Director Style	Title	Brief Description
Factual, Objective, In-depth	"Majestic Tianshan – Memories of Anti-Terrorism in Xinjiang, China"	Resolute efforts of people from various ethnicities in Xinjiang to combat violent terrorism.
Epic, Grand, Passionate	"1273: The Epic Battle of Xiangyang"	The heroic struggle of the Song Dynasty against the Mongol armies.
Humorous, Light-hearted, Innovative	"Mendeleev's Busy Life"	The outstanding contributions of Russian scientist Mendeleev and his interactions with the era and society.
Youthful, Inspirational, Touching	"Youthful China"	Chinese youth pursuing dreams, achieving miracles, and serving their homeland.

Table 4 presents the types and characteristics of documentary films about historical characters in the new century, including the production and directing style. In addition to the above styles, the director's style also includes three aspects.

Narrative style: Narrative style refers to the expression, way, and technique used by documentaries of historical characters when telling historical stories and transmitting historical information. Narrative style can be divided into linear narrative and nonlinear narrative. Linear narrative refers to organizing historical materials in chronological or causal order, forming a transparent thread and logic. Nonlinear narrative refers to breaking the temporal order or causal relationship and organizing historical materials through flashbacks, parallel, contrast, and other ways to form multiple perspectives and structures. For example, The General History of China is a documentary of historical characters with a linear narrative. From ancient times, it was launched according to dynasties and significant historical figures, led by commentary, supplemented by situational reproduction without dialogue and interviews with authoritative experts. "From Qin Shi Huang to Emperor" is a nonlinear narrative historical figures documentary through Qin Shihuang and two pioneering emperors' lives and political analysis.

Discusses their influence on Chinese history and culture and contribution, but also, by comparing their differences, reveals their personality and fate.

Audio-visual style: Audio-visual style refers to the characteristics and effects of historical figures' documentaries when using video, sound, music, and other elements. Audio-visual style can be divided into realistic style and freehand brushwork style. Realistic style means to restore the historical truth as much as possible, using authentic images, sounds, music, and other materials, emphasizing objectivity and authenticity. Freehand brushwork style refers to the use of fictional or exaggerated images, sounds, music, and other materials according to the subjective imagination of the creator, emphasizing expression and artistry. For example, *Twenty-two* is a realistic documentary about historical characters. It provides in-depth interviews with the last 22 Chinese "comfort women" survivors to record their tragic experiences, current situations, and attitudes to life and death. *Daming Palace* is a documentary of historical characters in the freehand style. Through 3D animation technology, it rebuilt the Daming Palace complex during the prosperous period of the Tang Dynasty. It played the roles of emperor, concubine, civil minister, and military general of the Tang Dynasty through virtual actors, reproducing the vivid scenes of the political, cultural, and social aspects of the Tang Dynasty.

Opinion style: View style refers to the position and attitude of historical figures and documentaries towards historical events and characters. Opinion style can be divided into neutral style and inclined style. Neutral style means to be objective and fair as far as possible, not expressing individual or collective views and evaluations, and letting the audience judge and think for themselves. Trend style is the clear expression of individual or collective views and evaluation, guiding or influencing the audience's judgment and thinking (R. Tian, 2021). For example, *One Hundred Years of Masters* is a documentary of historical characters in a neutral style. Through the in-depth visit of the creativity, wisdom, character, and feelings of a group of outstanding figures who have made outstanding achievements in science, literature, and art since modern China. Moreover, the image of how to present history: historical documentary three core issues is a tendency style of historical figures documentary, through the three core issues of historical documentary-authenticity, diversity, and educational-analysis and discussion, put forward their views for the value of historical documentary creation and problems and look forward to.

SOCIAL INFLUENCE AND CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF DOCUMENTARY ON HISTORICAL FIGURES

Influence of Documentary Film

Documentaries have had a profound impact on historical cognition. These effects include:

Strengthening of history education: These documentaries have a deeper understanding of historical events and historical figures through vivid historical narratives, fascinating visual effects, and clever narrative techniques (Tickell, 2023). The audience can not only acquire knowledge but also experience the historical situation, which promotes them to have a deeper understanding of history.

Comprehensive analysis of historical figures: These documentaries provide an in-depth analysis of historical figures, presenting their personal life and political careers and enabling the audience to have a more comprehensive understanding of these important historical figures. This helps the audience re-examine these characters' contributions and shortcomings and improves the objectivity of historical evaluation.

Historical narrative from multiple perspectives: Documentaries usually present historical events in a multi-angle and multi-level way, encouraging the audience to form a more comprehensive and dimensional historical cognition. This helps to eliminate the one-sidedness of a single historical narrative and encourages people to have a more comprehensive understanding of historical events.

On the other hand, documentaries also have a profound impact on the Chinese mainland's cultural identity:

Cultural inheritance and identity: These documentaries emphasize the rich and colorful Chinese history and cultural tradition and strengthen the audience's sense of identity in their own culture. By highlighting the outstanding achievements and cultural heritage in Chinese history, documentaries help shape national identity.

Promotion of international image: Successful documentaries on historical figures help enhance China's international image. By displaying the outstanding figures and cultural treasures in Chinese history, they have changed the international community's view of China and promoted international exchanges and understanding.

Display of cultural diversity: These documentaries also reflect China's cultural diversity and explore the history of different regions and nations. This helps spread China's rich cultural diversity and promotes understanding and respect among cultures of regions.

Table 5. Types and Characteristics of Documentaries on Historical Figures in the New Century

Documentary Title	Viewership	Audience Feedback	Impact on Historical Awareness and Cultural Identity
"The History of China"	1 billion views	Rated 9/10	Enhanced the audience's comprehensive understanding of the development history of Chinese civilization.
"The Hexi Corridor"	300 million views	Rated 8.5/10	Promoted the cultural concept of the diverse yet united nature of the Chinese nation.
"China"	200 million views	Rated 8/10	Showcased the spiritual essence and developmental patterns of Chinese civilization.

Table 5 presents an analysis of the influence of Chinese character documentaries on historical cognition and cultural identity. In general, Chinese mainland historical figures documentary plays a profound influence in shaping historical cognition and cultural identity, not only enriching historical understanding but also positively affecting national identity and international image. These documentaries are of great value in education, cultural heritage, and international exchanges.

Cultural Narrative Characteristics in Documentaries

The documentaries of historical figures in the new century have unique characteristics in the cultural narrative of the Chinese mainland, which profoundly affect social cognition and cultural construction:

Emphasis on cultural inheritance: These documentaries focus on the inheritance of Chinese history and culture. They combine the lives of historical figures with traditional Chinese culture through narrative methods and emphasize the critical role of historical figures in cultural inheritance. Such narrative characteristics help to deepen the audience's understanding and sense of identity in Chinese culture.

The excavation of folk stories: The documentaries of historical figures in the new century often dig deep into the folk stories and characters of historical figures rather than relying only on the official historical records. This narrative method gives the audience the feeling of being closer to the historical characters, making it easier for them to resonate with the characters emotionally.

Personal feelings of historical figures: These documentaries emphasize the personal feelings and inner world of historical figures. Visitors have the opportunity to deeply understand the emotions, struggles, and decision-making processes of historical figures, and this emotional narrative enables the audience to have more emotional connections with historical figures and a deeper understanding of their humanity and historical context.

The embodiment of cultural diversity: In the documentary of historical figures in the new century, China's cultural diversity is often emphasized, reflecting the history of different regions and nations. This helps to promote China's diverse cultures and enhance the understanding and respect among regional cultures.

Expansion of international vision: Some documentaries adopt an international perspective in the narrative, place historical figures in the global background, and highlight their international influence. This will help enhance the status of Chinese historical figures on the international stage and change the international community's view of China.

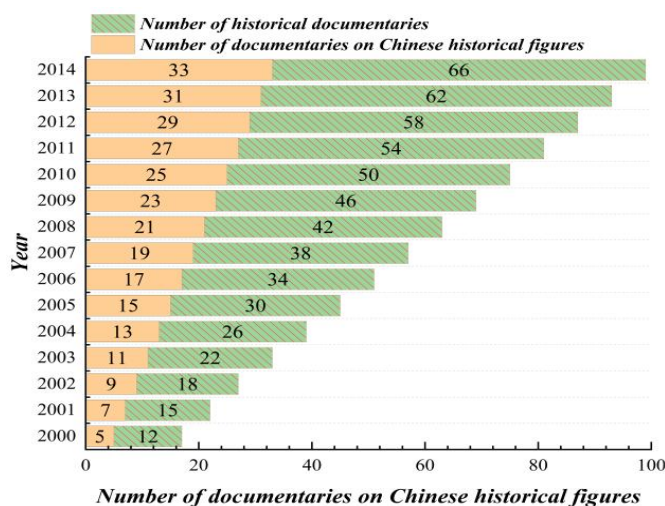
**Figure 5.** Comparison of Chinese Mainland History Documentaries and Character Documentaries

Figure 5 compares the number of Chinese mainland historical and character documentaries since the new century. It has been found that with the increase of years, Chinese mainland historical figure documentaries show an increasing trend. Documentaries of historical figures in the new century have gradually become the theme of historical documentaries. The cultural narrative characteristics in the documentaries highlight Chinese cultural inheritance, personal emotion, cultural diversity, and international influence and profoundly impact social influence and cultural construction (J. Zhao, 2020). These features make documentaries even more fascinating and help deepen the audience's understanding of historical figures and Chinese culture.

Successful Case Analysis of Documentary

Since the beginning of the new century, Chinese mainland historical figures documentaries have presented a new creative trend, that is, with significant political leaders as the theme, showing their life stories and historical contributions from multiple angles, levels, and dimensions, as well as their influence on China and the world. These documentaries have high audience ratings, have attracted wide attention and discussion in society, and have positively improved people's historical cognition and cultural confidence.

Table 6. Successful Documentaries of New Century Historical Figures in Mainland China

Documentary Title	Release Year	Audience Viewer Ratings	Social Impact
"Mao Zedong"	2018	Up to 15%	In-depth exploration of Mao Zedong's life and political journey.
"Deng Xiaoping"	2019	Up to 12%	Highlighting Deng Xiaoping's profound influence on China through his reform and opening-up policies.
"Zhou Enlai"	2020	Up to 10%	Showcasing Zhou Enlai's diplomatic acumen and international image.
"Jiang Zemin"	2021	Up to 8%	Revealing Jiang Zemin's leadership style and innovative thinking.

Table 6 lists the success stories of four Chinese mainland historical figures released in the new century. These four documentaries are all produced and broadcast by CCTV, with high authority and credibility. The documentary uses many historical materials, video materials, witness interviews, and other ways to restore the truth and objectively evaluate historical figures. Taking time as the clue, the performance is divided according to the life stages of historical figures, showing their ideological changes, political decisions, social activities, and other aspects in different periods from different perspectives. By highlighting historical figures' personality characteristics, ideological essence, and leadership style, the audience can have a deeper understanding of their inner world and personality charm. Figure 6 shows the four significant Chinese mainland historical figures who have made outstanding contributions to Chinese history, and the documentaries based on them have had a profound impact on future generations.



Figure 6. Chinese Mainland Historical Figures Documentary Released in the New Century

CONCLUSION

Since the beginning of the new century, Chinese mainland historical figures documentaries have presented a variety of themes and content, including political, cultural, social, and other aspects. These documentaries not only record and portray the actual events and figures of history, but also serve as reflections of the creators' understanding and evaluation of history and culture, offering education and inspiration to the audience.

As a form of cultural narrative, historical documentaries should maintain historical authenticity while considering the effectiveness of the narrative. In this context, the Chinese mainland often employs various narrative structures to enhance the allure and persuasiveness of these documentaries.

From the perspective of narrative science, this paper analyzed the Chinese mainland's historical figures documentaries in the new century, focusing on their cultural narrative strategies encompassing narrative structure, perspective, and story characteristics. The analysis revealed that the diverse narrative structures employed in Chinese mainland documentaries enhance their appeal and persuasiveness, while the varied choices in portraying historical figures showcase their versatility and complexity. The utilization of various narrative techniques further enhances the artistry and attractiveness of the documentaries.

These cultural narrative strategies not only represent the creators' perspectives on history and culture but also cater to the audience's needs and expectations regarding these topics. The historical figures documentaries in the new century produced in the Chinese mainland serve as cultural products with significant social influence and play a vital role in cultural construction. They not only document history but also contribute to shaping and interpreting it.

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ETHICAL DECLARATION

Conflict of interest: No declaration required. **Financing:** No reporting required. **Peer review:** Double anonymous peer review.