

Essential Elements for a Successful Family Film-Take *102 NOT OUT* as an Example

Yunyi Wang

University College, University of Toronto, M5S 2E8, Canada

*Corresponding author. Email: 3188375082@qq.com

ABSTRACT

In recent years, more and more family films started to enter the film market with a relatively high reputation and box office. *Shoplifters* from Japan and *Coco* from Mexico can both be typical examples of them. This research mainly focus on making a family film by seeking the essential elements in the movie *102 NOT OUT* and learning from its successful experience. By analyzing the differences, the author compares this movie with others in the same category, *102 NOT OUT* contains four elements that makes it a unique family film. As a result, the author refines a methodology of making a widely recognized family film.

Keywords: *Family film, discrimination, creativity, positivity*

1. INTRODUCTION

The film *102 NOT OUT* is an Indian comedy film directed by Umesh Shukla in 2018 [1]. After releasing, it won a high box office in many countries and broke out the cultural boundaries, which also touched people's hearts. This Bollywood film proves that an appealing family film should be against the common belief, be creative, focus on broader society and be filled with positive energy. The author intends to discover how these four elements work together and make contribution to such a high-quality film respectively meanwhile seeking for the suggestions for the future family film.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE REASONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY FILM

2.1. Against Common Belief

To start with, the film *102 NOT OUT* is against the discrimination of older adults in society. According to Discrimination in Old Age, the stereotype of older people are common at every level [2]. Well known as the person who has slow reaction speed, lacks of energy and refuses to absorb new knowledge, the protagonist Babu is a perfect model who matches all these characteristics at the beginning of the movie. The first shot, taking place in a bathroom, does an excellent character introduction of him. Babu likes to set an alarm of 14 minutes while taking a shower, simply because once he caught a cold after having it for 15 minutes. Double-check, whether he turns off the tap, becomes a daily habit that he must do, and the most significant thing for him is to take medicines on time. What is more, this 75-year-old man always smells like he is in a hospital, since he nearly comes to visit Doctor Mehta every

day, even he is healthy. Within a few minutes the audience can understand that, without any surprise, Babu is a perfect "old person" in their mind, who is careful, concerning the health and having a fear of disease.

In contrast, Babu's father, 102 year-old guy whose name is Datatraya, has a precisely different personality with his son. Compared to Babu, always wearing white undershirt, Data is more like a young man. His scene appears when he wears a small pink suit. Then Data would be introduced to the audience step by step, totally against the prevalent discrimination of older people. In the filmmaker's words, Data is like a perfect spokesperson for elderly person products with a mental age of 26. To discover more details, he often watches the stars at night, using an old telescope, so it can be known that this is a romantic person who loves dreaming. To decorate the house, Data is always willing to buy all the flowers from the street; while passing the most familiar road, he loves kicking the football with kids around him. Most importantly, he has a poster of a Chinese man named Wang Chongbei, who keeps a world record of his longevity. Data hopes that one day he can break it, living over 118 years. As children always like to compare with each other, Data is more like a kid who always has ambition and motivation although his physical age is 102.

Babu and his father Data creates a sharp contrast meanwhile displays two options in front of the audience and makes people start thinking about which attitude they should pick while enjoying their lives. When people getting aged, being careful and calm is not the only way that they can choose to cater the society, and keeping naive like Data can bring old people an entirely new world. Simultaneously, the character introductions in *102 NOT OUT* also inform young people that it is unreasonable to put discrimination on all the older people in society.

Contrast is an important way to demonstrate the filmmaker's opinion and oppose the common belief. Like in the film *Coco*, the protagonist, little boy Miguel, is crazy about music, but his family members hate it and make

music contraband in their family [3]. In this respect, more conflicts can be developed through contrast, and the audience can better understand the boy's perseverance. This film points out that even majority of people choose to obey their family, teenagers can still have their own thoughts and making their dreams come true through efforts. Similarly, by using the same technique, *102 NOT OUT* objects to the discrimination of older adults in an exaggerated way, which is impressive. It helps to challenge the common beliefs and makes it a high-quality family film which delivers a statement: Youth is a state of life instead of a time period.

2.2. Creativity

Creativity is another critical element that leads to a successful family film. The movie *102 NOT OUT* is creative in the aspects of topic selection and storytelling. The filmmaker decides to tell a story between father and son. However, what surprises the viewers is that the central clue within the movie is the 102-year-old father who wants to take his rigid son into the nursing house, so that he can live actively and break Wang Chongbei's world record. That forms a hook that makes the film more appealing, and it can be considered as the first action among the three-act-structure in a movie, which makes the audience start to engage in the protagonist's life and curious about what will happen next.

As the story keeps developing, Data hopes to make Babu abandon his old habits and seek back his energy and passion towards life, thus he creates various tasks. Completing all the challenges is the only way for Babu to stay at home, rather than spending rest of his life in the nursing house. For example, the first task for him is to write a love letter to his wife who has already passed away, and therefore, Babu can start feel excited and remind the time that he was still young. As a retired math teacher who hates writing, it is difficult for him to complete such a letter, especially to his wife. Finally, although Babu makes the love letter more like a math formula sheet, more strong emotions once again appear on his face, and it becomes the first step of reburning Babu's youth.

Coming tasks such as arguing with doctor Mehta on purpose and cutting Babu's favorite blanket are both surprisingly and ridiculous as well. Containing the elements of a "success story", *102 NOT OUT* mainly displays the process of Babu's "growth": changing from a typical elderly person into a powerful "young" man. The purpose of Data's tasks is to make Babu stop seeing the doctors everyday and seeking for consolation from antiquated stuffs, but spending time on enjoying the beauty of life. Viewers would understand that every task has its purpose that can teach Babu how to find back his original young soul. Therefore, whenever the movie shows a new task, people will try to figure out its intention. Since the audience can barely predict which task may come next due to the creativity of the story, they ought to pay more attention to the plot. This is the second-act that filmmaker uses to make people connect much closer to the film. In general, creativity makes a better family film. People are familiar

with the vicious stepmother, rebellious children, and tender parents, and that is why they would have a fancy for a naughty Data and his aggrieved son.

2.3. Focusing on Broader Society

Apart from the anti-discrimination and creativity, this Bollybood family film has another merit. Rather than limited in one family, it discusses at a level of broader society and can resonate with people.

From Babu, Data, and all the people in Mehta's hospital, people can think of India's ageing population. Based on *The Economic Times*, a large number of citizens are over 60 in India and it may continue showing an upward trend, probably reaching 20 percent of the overall population in 2050 [4]. Within all the older adults in the country, approximately 15 million are like Babu and Data, living alone in their houses without a partner. Suffering from the disease in both physically and mentally is a common issue that they cannot avoid [5]. India's countryside always lacks a nursing house and a caring center that can provide professional health service, which leads to harsh conditions for many Indian people's later life [6]. The film has a significant role that can remind more young people to care about all the "Babu" in society by offering more health organizations, love and accompany.

Another phenomenon is related to parenthood, which touches the audience a lot from Babu's son Amo, an International student in America. To support Amo's learning career, Babu almost spends all his money. Nevertheless, Amo ignores all these contributions and never returns after getting married in America. Every time he writes letters to his father, he asks for the money, refusing all the requests from the lowly father and always uses the sentence "I hope you understand" as the end of the conversation. Later, Amo's mother died with Alzheimer's Disease. and she forgot everybody but her son. Unfortunately, the son who dose not have the Alzheimer forgot everything and dose not care about his mother in the hometown at all. Amo may be an extreme example, but it reflects the real situation as there are many Indian families whose children are learning abroad in other countries. The report shows that 44 percent of Indian parents want to send their sons or daughters to other countries for further study, and the most popular targets are America, Australia and Canada. Parents' mission is to improve language skills of their kids and gain more access to a well-paid job in the future [7]. However, the gap between kids and parents can also appear due to different cultures and thoughts. Many teenagers ignore the family's efforts to cover the massive financial cost and look down on their parents who cannot catch up with modern society. Everyone cannot reject growth and people have to leave their home for different reasons no matter whether they are ready or not, just like the birds have to fly towards the blue sky. They keep walking and always forget to look back and hug their parents, who have their most profound love for them. The film *102 NOT OUT* reflects the actual condition of thousands of families

in India and teaches the teenagers that the boundless universe is wonderful, but never be "Amo".

2.4 Positive Energy

The film delivers not only a story but an emotion. After watching *102 NOT OUT*, most of the viewers should feel happy and warm since the positive energy is filled with the movie from beginning to the end. As a comedy movie, it never lacks funny points which can make people laugh. Besides, Babu's growth makes him a "young" man again. When Amo finally comes back for the heritage, Babu yells at him and says, "Get out!" at the airport in front of all the passengers. He break the piggy bank, that Amo used to collect money when he was a kid, now it is the only heritage that Amo could take away. "I hope you understand," Babu says to Amo with a smile. At that moment, all the audience were satisfied in that they can see a powerful Babu, full of confidence, passion, and power to fight against the whole world without fear. Love is mutual and no one should simply give in. Justice of morality wins in the end, and is the plot that can also satisfy the audience. The movie illustrates that people should be grateful and noticing all the contributions from their family members.

The film also uses a romantic way to tell the sad clips. Babu's wife passes away early. While memorizing her on the wedding anniversary, instead of making the protagonist say how much he misses her, Babu buys a cake from the City Cake Shop and packs it carefully as usual. He shares the cake with the carriage driver and many homeless kids near the road in a horse-drawn carriage at night. The night is dark and soft light comes from the street lamp, making the scene comfort and sweet. Kids enjoy the cake, and their eyes become the brightest stars, light the night. Even though Babu's wife cannot share the moment with him, the love is everlasting. Babu shifts the love towards more people around him rather than turns negative.

In addition, the ending is also aspiring that it stimulates the passion for living. Data dies at the very end after giving all his tasks. Without tears on the characters' face, Data told Babu: "Your father's whole life is like a football game when you feel my heart stops beating, you have to whistle to celebrate." "When I sit on the cloud with Mr. Wang Chongbei, I will tell him that my son gonna break your world record, only 43 years to go!" He also says, "I'm dead set against death, and I've never died before..." The 102 year-old man comes to the end of his life, but all of his words still sound cheerful. Cherishing every moment of life, having the biggest dream, and staying positive can turn the brutal reality into a lovely story. On the most familiar street, musicians play the saxophone, kids are running, and florists are waiting for the buyers, and then it starts to rain. Data stands on his wheelchair, and Babu, who likes 14 minutes of shower, throws away his umbrella. They enjoy dancing in the rain until they are alone on the street. Soon after, the screen turns black and the audience hears a loud whistle. The film avoids talking about the sadness brought by death but uses lots of ink to describe the beauty of life.

The movie *Cocoon*, 1985, is also a comedy-drama story that has a sad ending. Antareans decides to take all the residences to Antarea, where people can stay young forever, but the police tries to stop their boat and destroys their plan. Finally, David jumps into the water and strives for more time that allows others to leave for Antarea. The whole movie ends with David's smile, and the Antarena boat is approaching a light source. The ending gives people space to imagine, and similar to *102 NOT OUT*, it claims that the yearning for a better life and future will be better.

3. FUTURE SUGGESTIONS

Making a well-recognized family film is not an easy process, except learning from other movie's successful experience, valuable tips are also worth seeking. One of the suggestions people have is to use fewer "traffic artists". Knowing from the commercial films that consider younger groups as the primary target audience, the family film aims to attract a wide range of ages. Therefore, ordinary appearance can shorten the distance between the audience and the story, make people better understand the protagonist, have a sense of substitution, and better focus on the story itself instead of being distracted by the young actors with outstanding features. Moreover, limiting the number of traffic artists can also save the cost in the producing process, so that more expenditure can be used to promote the quality of the film. What is more, future family films can talk about more family forms. Speaking of the "family", people may think of the grandparents, parents and children. However, not all the families are the same. The single-parent family, reformed family, family with a member who has a unique job, and the family made up by people in various nations are worth talking as well. As the saying goes: "The happy families are all the same, but thousands of the reasons may cause the unhappy ones", a movie is a tool that can display other people's life, discovering more hidden corners in the world can encourage people to emphasize more issues and make the society a warmest family.

4. CONCLUSION

The film *102 NOT OUT* is against the discrimination of older adults, and it uses creativity to give the viewers surprise, focusing on broader society and promoting positive energy. All these elements make it a successful family film and a widespread presence in the film market. Future family films should study from it, using limited traffic stars and try to dig out more fresh topics that are meaningful. This research discusses limited films and mainly focus on the culture and society level. After, the author may analyze more on both the technique fields and the cinematography aspect to continue perfecting the methodology of making a great family film. The author expects more excellent family films to be seen in the coming future to touch people's hearts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First of all, I would like to thank Professor David Howard, who helped me determine the research direction and always gave me useful suggestions as well as the professors from my university who provided me with the knowledge about films. Further, I want to show my gratitude to the valuable guidance from my teachers. I cannot complete my research paper without their support. Finally, thanks to my classmates for delivering the passion to me and bringing me a positive learning atmosphere.

REFERENCES

[1] 102 Not Out “I will never let your son beat my son”, Bao Muxiao, China Academic Journal Electronic Publishing House, [Online Available] Retrieved from <http://www.cnki.net>, [Accessed on August 10th, 2020]

[2] Discrimination in old age: multiple, cumulative and on increase, Bridget Sleaf, HelpAge International, August, 2011 [Online Available] Retrieved from <https://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/documents/HelpAge%20briefing%20discrimination%20in%20old%20age%20Aug%202011.pdf>. [Accessed on August 10th, 2020]

[3] Coco full movie, 2017 English Compilation, [Online Available] Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwwKtOMD9pE> [Accessed on August 10th, 2020]

[4] Aging in India, World Health Organization, Geneva, 1999, [Online Available] Retrieved from https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/65965/WHO_HSC_AHE_99.2.pdf;jsessionid=D723F0C1F3EA893BD78ACC07BF261BD6?sequence=1 [Accessed on August 10th, 2020]

[5] Share of population over age of 60 in India projected to increase to 20% in 2050: UN, Aug 17, 2019 [Online Available] Retrieved from <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/share-of-population-over-age-of-60-in-india-projected-to-increase-to-20-in-2050-un/articleshow/68919318.cms> [Accessed on August 10th, 2020]

[6] How “Elderly Staying Alone” Cope Up with their Age and Deteriorating Health: A Qualitative Exploration from Rural Wardha, Central India, Sourav Goswami and Pradeep R Deshmukh, 2018, [Online Available]

Retrieved from

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6199841/> [Accessed on August 10th, 2020]

[7] 44 Per Cent Indian Parents Want To Send Their Kids To US, UK Or Australia For Education, Impel Oversea Education, [Online Available] Retrieved from <https://www.impeloverseas.com/44-percent-indian-parents-want-send-kids-us-uk-australia-education/> [Accessed on August 10th, 2020]