

The Construction of “Landscape” and National Identity in the Film “the Daughters of Fisherman” in the Enemy-Occupied Area

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Abstract: As a film born in the enemy-occupied area, Bu Wancang's “The Daughters of Fisherman” constructively recreated an ideal home in the overcast enemy-occupied area with the natural scenery of Taihu Lake. The scenery of the lake and mountains and the harmonious life of fishermen together constitute a unique “landscape” in the film. By analyzing the “landscape” in the film, the author of this paper explored the expression of Bu Wancang's experience of survival in the enemy-occupied area and national identity in the film, and thus explored the possibility and path of understanding the emotional truth and national identity in the films of the enemy-occupied area through the “landscape” through the dialogue of culture and history.

1. Introduction

“The Daughters of Fisherman” is a film directed by Bu Wancang and starring Zhou Xuan and Gu Yelu, which was released in 1943 in the enemy-occupied Shanghai. It was adapted from “Why Not Her” by Ouyang Yuqian. It is a story talking about Cui Shijun, a student at a Chinese art school, fell in love with Zhou Qiongzhu, the daughter of a fisherman. They fell apart, misunderstood each other and had their misunderstandings lifted.

In the preparation and filming of “The Daughters of Fisherman” and the review of the enemy-occupied area in the 1940s, the filming of the film's extensive live-action scenes of Taihu Lake is a focus of attention, which has not been given enough attention by relevant studies in the academy at the present time. In fact, the landscape of harmony between human beings and nature in “The Daughters of Fisherman” is the ideal home constructed by Bu Wancang and is present throughout the film. When we go back to the “historical scene” and analyze the landscape constructed by Bu Wancang, we can find the “landscape” behind the landscape - the expression of the repressed survival experience in the enemy-occupied area and the confirmation of the national subjectivity. It can be found that the “landscape” behind the landscape - the expression of the repressed survival experience in the enemy-occupied areas and the confirmation of national subjectivity.

2. The Urban-Rural Dichotomy in Adaptation and the Landscape as a Medium of Expression

In 1926, Ouyang Yuqian and Bu Wancang collaborated on “Why Not Her”. In 1943, Bu

Wancang filmed “The Daughters of Fisherman”, which was adapted from Why Not Her. The larger parts of the adaptation are as follows:

For one thing, Zhang Guoying did evil for love. In “Why Not Her”, Zhang Guo Ying's character is the daughter of a loan shark, Zhang Jiayou, but she was kind-hearted and urged her father to stop evil and do good. In terms of emotions, although she loves Cui Shijun, she gave up when she saw him falling in love with the daughter of the fisherman. In the adaptation of “The Daughters of Fisherman”, Zhang Guoying, a flawless female figure, became jealous of the fisherman's daughter Zhou Qiongzhu's love for Cui Shijun, and forged a letter saying that Cui Shijun has another lover in Shanghai and abandoned Zhou Qiongzhu while he was in Shanghai. That caused Zhou Qiongzhu greatly stimulated and got mental disorder.

Secondly, the image of Cui Shijun was weakened. In “Why Not Her”, Cui Shijun fled to Shanghai because he smashed a plaque given to Zhang Jiayou by the Good Samaritan Church and exposed his hypocrisy in public, causing Zhang Jiayou to have Cui arrested by the police. However, in the adaptation of “The Daughters of Fisherman”, Cui Shijun went to Shanghai to escape from his father's wedding to Zhang Guoying in order to stand up for himself in Shanghai. It cancelled his confrontation with Zhang Jiayou in the street.

Thirdly, it cancelled the plot of Zhang Jiayou's conversion. In “Why Not Her”, Zhang Jiayou burned the loan sharks' notes because of the death of his youngest son and was persuaded by his daughter to give up evil and turn to good. However, in “The Daughters of Fisherman”, Zhang Jiayou was always the same, valuing profit over righteousness, and had not changed for the better.

Zhang Guoying and Zhang Jiayu are two characters that represent the “city people”. In the process of adaptation, one of them hurt the innocent out of love, and the other was eliminated from the plot of reformation and exists as a bully from the beginning. Compared to “Why Not Her,” Zhang Jiayou, as the link between the city and the countryside, also became weak and easy to believe in Zhang Guoying's instigation, so the adaptation also highlighted the dichotomy between the city and the countryside. In the structure of the dichotomy between the city and the countryside, the landscape acted as a medium for the expression of ideological tendencies.

In the film, the director repeatedly used the perspective of Cui Shijun, an outsider, to “discover” the beauty of the fishing village. For example, when painting on the shore, he exclaimed in a lyrical tone, “Nature is full of life and happiness, just like the lake and mountains here, which make us feel the greatness of nature and give us endless fun. “ When he saw the fishing boats floating on the lake in front of Zhou's house, he revealed to Zhou Qiongzhu that “this is the ideal life of a family”. When Zhou Qiongzhu was worried that Cui Shijun would dislike her status as a country girl, Cui Shijun confessed his feelings - “I like you for your wildness, but I don't like women who smell like civilization”. Through the eyes of Cui Shijun, a city dweller who came to the countryside, he eulogized the “ideal” of living in a natural and wild environment, while rejecting the city life as “pandemonium” and thus also rejecting the “civilized” city dwellers. In this way, the film gave more emotional identification to the countryside in the structure of urban-rural dual opposition.

However, although the ideal home is beautiful, can he return?

As analyzed in the previous article, after the adaptation, the character of Cui Shijun was weakened. He went to Shanghai to escape from his marriage, but in Shanghai, his paintings did not sell well, and his ideal of independence was far away. Secondly, although Zhang Guoying was ashamed of Zhou Qiongzhu, she wrote a letter to Cui Shijun to go back to the countryside to see Zhou Qiongzhu, but the film gave a close-up of the engagement ring on Zhang Guoying's hand in the rental room in Shanghai. How Jang Guoying, who had an engagement ring, and Jang Ga-yoo, who did not change his evil ways, would stir up the ending, we cannot know. The film then ended abruptly in a scene where Jang Guoyoung helplessly imagined Cui Shijun and Zhou Qiongzhu getting married. In response, Bu Wancang said in the interview, “(Cui Shijun and Zhou Qiongzhu)

one is in a dress, but the other is still in a shabby fisherman's dress, the audience must be wondering, in fact, that is just a fantasy of a rich lady, whether they are married or not? I want to leave it to the audience's imagination.” (1944 “New Movie World” 6th Movie Star Symposium) In a dark echo, the song “Crazy World” is used to depict the beauty of the countryside in the eyes of the “aborigines” from the perspective of the daughter of the fisherman after their insanity:

The birds call and sing

The flowers bloom gently

You are so happy, so happy, so happy

Why do the birds sing?

Why do the flowers bloom?

You are so strange, so strange!

What does it mean to be happy, what does it mean to be strange, what does it mean to be in love, what does it mean to be in love?

No more birds singing, no more flowers blooming, I don't want this crazy world, this crazy world!

The pain of the ideal home being suppressed is expressed in the best way possible, and the power of maintaining this ideal home is too weak in front of the powerful opposing forces. Therefore, with the release of “The Daughters of Fisherman”, the 'crazy world' has aroused a strong resonance in the hearts of the audience. The film also makes a double entendre when Zhang Guoying tries to get Zhou Qiongzhu to remarry, using Zhou Qiongzhu's mouth to shout “They took our home away, they took our things away, and now they're buying our hearts with money”. This was keenly captured by Zhi Dayu in his review of “The Daughters of Fisherman” in New Cinema at the time - “Our home, it has been taken from us! Now they want to buy our hearts with money.’ This is when Zheng Yuru is using money to demand that she gave up her love for Gu Yelu, and Zhou Xuan spoke these words with such forceful words that they were truly painful, causing every audience member to feel unspeakable regret. (Zhi Dayu, 1943). As later recalled by the lead actor Gu Yelu - “The script writes about the fishermen's struggle against the fishing bully, interspersed with a love triangle. Its meaning is to resist the Japanese invasion of China, through the mouth of Qiongzhu's madness, lambasting the fishing bully, 'You forcefully occupy my family's land and rob my family's house ', is the impact of the Japanese invasion of our country, so that our people's homes are broken.” Although the ideal home is beautiful, the scenery on Taihu Lake is still moving, but because of the arrival of the invaders, “the birds are not allowed to sing from now on, the flowers are not allowed to bloom from now on”, the paradise on earth becomes “a crazy world” [1]. Bu Wancang focused on the beautiful scenery, in the play formed a change of first and then suppression, which was woven into the weakness of the guardian and the strength of the invasion [2]. In this structure, the presentation of scenery was not only a story background or natural existence, but also a process and product of cultural construction.

3. The Construction of the “Paradise” and National Identity

In this drama, the shooting and presentation of the Taihu Lake location is one of its major features [3]. From the preparation, shooting to the screening of the film, its location shooting was the focus of media attention. In the whole film, whether it was the fishermen sisters playing on the grass, Zhou Qiongzhu teaching Cui Shijun to scull on the boat, or Cui Shijun teaching Zhou Qiongzhu to write in the open space, Zhou Qiongzhu singing for Cui Shiun under the moon in the shadow of the flowers, the scenes presented in the countryside were more open, natural, beautiful and peaceful, presenting a picture of a paradise.

However, the Taihu Lake was not as peaceful and free as in the movie. It fell when it was first

bombed in 1937 [4]. After it fell, it was also under the iron heel, and could not live in peace. The land of Suzhou and Hangzhou “turned heaven into hell”. While “The Daughters of Fisherman” was being prepared and filmed, the Taihu Lake basin and Wuxi area were undergoing the Japanese “Clear the Country” campaign. Since the summer of 1941 to 1943, the puppet government in southern Jiangsu, Shanghai suburb of Taihu lake watershed “Japan-China cooperation, military and political integration, emptying the” movement of “Clear the Country” during through various means, such as military, political, economic blockade policy, not only in the blockade to add stronghold, construct blockhouses, small towns and villages an occupation and according to search, and blockade of land and water transportation, Wire grids were set up along railways and highways, with one camp for each mile and more than 20 men stationed at each camp. While imposing a tight blockade, they also carried out economic plundering, such as raiding the villagers for goods and forcing the distribution of “good citizen certificates” at high fees. In “The Daughters of Fisherman”, the free life of the fishermen, as the director Bu Wancang said in the mouth of the hero Cui Shijun-”This is the ideal life of a family”. The only thing is that this “ideal” home was constructed by Bu Wancang. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand that when the film was released, Feng Fan compared “The Daughters of Fisherman” with “The Fisherman's Song” in the review, saying, “Wouldn't it be a perfect subject if its theme could focus on the life of fishermen? (Pacific Weekly, 1943)” Why not focus on the reality of fishermen's lives, why not construct a paradise on the cloudy Lake Taihu, and what is the meaning of the “ideal” home on Lake Taihu?

During the turbulent times of war, as the Japanese imperial writers in the enemy-occupied areas put it, “It is wartime, and national life should cooperate with the wartime system. (New Cinema, 1943)” The film was placed in a wartime propaganda sequence. This “wartime” environment was also accompanied by colonization and invasion, and the inclusion of the Japanese “wartime system” was undoubtedly intended to incorporate colonial devices. In this regard, contemporary scholar Pang Zengyu has also noticed that “Manchu Film”'s landscape narrative of Northeast Inner Mongolia emphasizes its primitive and prehistoric nature and non-Chinese nature, using an implicit and built-in imperial perspective to potentially suggest the rationality and legitimacy of these lands being explored and colonized [5]. Liu Xiaoli also argues in her book that the colonizer's expropriation of the “landscape”, the unclaimed picturesque landscape, is a colonial conceit of the colonizer's depoliticization, which is embedded in the colonizer's cultural hegemony [6]. If the above is an analysis of the colonial device of landscape expropriation, and thus a clean-up of the colonial traces in literature and art, Bu Wancang's “The Daughters of Fisherman” is another way to enter the “landscape” of the enemy-occupied area.

Unlike the uncultivated landscapes in “The Eye of Empire”, the landscapes in “The Daughters of Fisherman” are landscapes with owners. Whether it is the fishing boats singing on Taihu Lake or the songs spreading love under the flowering trees, neither of them is primitive and flooded. The Chinese people are an integral part of the landscape from the perspective of its surface composition. From the inside, it contains a rich and specific cultural code of ancient China. Such a landscape communicates the emotions of a group imbued with the same national culture, evoked by such emotions, on the one hand, a sense of familiarity and, on the other, exclusivity. From the viewpoint of the viewer, the “scenery” does not only refer to the lake and the mountains, but also to the interaction between the lake and the mountains and the fishermen, which includes both physical scenery and scenes. In essence, the “scenery” that the viewer admires is actually the ideal life that people and objects transpire together. The ideal home is here, so why should others bother us?

But as the plot progressed, people and objects were no longer in harmony under the stirring of outsiders. The picturesque scenery made the daughter of the fisherman more desolate and sadder, and the scene of desperate throwing into the lake made the objects and scenery threaten to devour people. The film left an unpredictable ending. The harmony of the landscape was stirred up by

foreign forces. It was impossible to know whether peace would be restored, and this was a true expression of emotions in the fallen area. For this reason, the film resonated with the audience - "In central China, it was a sensation everywhere, especially when Zhou Xuan's 'Crazy World' was a hit with everyone. Even children as young as six or seven years old could sing it with great enthusiasm. (Power Daily, 1944)"

4. Conclusion

The "landscapes" in the enemy-occupied area films have their own special codes under unique historical circumstances. Through the "landscape" in the enemy-occupied area films, we can grasp the emotional reality in them and discover the identity of national subjectivity in them. But at the same time, it is worth noting that when we re-enter the interpretation of the enemy-occupied area films through the key of "landscape", we do not limit ourselves to a closed reading of "landscape", but rather to an "open reading" that opens up to history. In the dialogue with history, we grasp how the "landscape" is constructively reproduced and how it is expressed. In this way, in the process of getting close to the vivid historical scenes, we can fully understand the complex ecology of the film industry in the enemy-occupied area and better grasp the emotional truth and national identity that leap from the "landscape".

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