

The Cultural Orientation: The Spatial Construction of Yi Nationality-themed Films

Xiangdong Zhou

Graduate University of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Abstract: Yi Nationality-themed films create a unique cultural scene through the selection of traditional/modern living space in the process of creation. In the films, the space has become a metaphor for the identity of the Yi nationality, a concrete expression of "national unity" and the identity of The Times. And to a certain extent, it has been a reflection of national culture and adherence and a replica of national myth and epic tradition. However, the unique aesthetic style of Yi Nationality-themed films is not presented in the construction of space. To create a unique aesthetic style, we must use national symbols to construct a unique audio-visual space, pay attention to the construction of image cultural space to create a unique aesthetic style, and then realize the rapid development of Yi Nationality-themed films.

Keywords: Yi Nationality-themed films, Movie space, The space of Yi Nationality, Spatial construction.

1. Introduction

As a kind of video medium, film art is placed under the vision of minority culture record, which undoubtedly makes it become an effective carrier to explain the national culture and record the national customs. The ethnic minority-themed films are full of cultural meaning of writing ethnic memory and witnessing the history of ethnic culture. However, Yi Nationality-themed films is still a "plausible" awkward situation in film art creation in China. Though it has own characters, language, customs, building style and features, and even has 5000 years of history of a nation, his image creation shows a phenomenon that is not in harmony with the development of the nation and other styles of art. Since the founding of new China 70 years ago, the creation of Yi Nationality-themed films has played an important role in promoting national unity and propagating national culture. But in recent years, Yi Nationality-themed films is not in general prosperous situation in the film creation formation such as Mongolian, Tibetan and other ethnic minorities, which directly causes the consequence of missing of national culture feature in the image record. and in the existing Yi Nationality-themed films, the movies making "nation" as the coat while lacking of kernel can be found everywhere. Therefore, the interpretation and analysis of Yi Nationality-themed films from the perspective of spatial construction can realize the grasp of "nationality" in the image to a greater extent.

Space is not only natural and geographical, but also social and psychological. The spatial reproduction in the film is not a simple geographical selection, but a selection of social space with political and cultural connotations. "Through the existing film art picture, we can see that the Chinese minority movies depict life content and boundary story happened, the structure characteristics of geographic environment of southwest area and the Mongolian and Tibetan impact and even restrict the overall characteristics of China's ethnic minorities culture, and thus affect its movie character's unique artistic style and features" [1]. The selection of space in Yi nationality-themed films is the most intuitive embodiment of Yi nationality culture. The space selection and construction of Yi nationality-themed films are of great significance to the

creation of Yi nationality-themed films. What kind of space to choose and how to use the unique space of the nationality to narrate is the primary guarantee to construct the unique national audio-visual style of Yi nationality-themed films.

2. The Selection of Narrative Space for Yi Nationality-themed Films

Since the mysterious Travel Companion in 1955, Yi nationality-themed films have gone through a glorious course of more than 60 years since the founding of new China. If film art begins to create from the vision of the culture of Yi nationality, Yi nationality-themed films would be of a kind of aesthetic and each space field would become a show of Yi nationality people's survival and an important carrier of style and features of Yi nationality. However, when the films which represent the science and technology and the modern civilization combine with the Yi nationality people's traditional culture, Yi nationality-themed films will inevitably become a great "multivariate space" which will collect all kinds of elements of cultures become a kind of culture, and finally become the narrative space of Yi nationality-themed films which combines the modern and traditional space.

2.1. The Space of Traditional Life

The public's cognition of the world is inseparable from the identification of space, because space itself is a brand of culture! As far as film art is concerned, space is the container of narrative content, so the traditional living space of Yi nationality inevitably becomes an important content of image selection. Yi nationality-themed films mainly select villages, valleys and mountains as the space of traditional life. These highly recognizable regional Spaces are combined with cultural symbols such as folk cultures and costumes of people of Yi nationality, which depicts the outline of the face of people's cultural life of Yi nationality for the audience. In Yi nationality-themed images, such as "the daughter of the slave" (1978), "dance" (1981) and so on, huts, snow-capped mountains, stockade, cane bridge become the important signifiers of construction of Yi nationality people's living

space. From the appearance of these image symbols, these field symbols with the cultural characteristics of Yi nationality become the symbol of Yi nationality-themed films. These traditional Spaces and symbols are the crystallization of Yi nationality people's unique mode of production in the process of thousands of years of life and habitat. They are not only the decoration to witness and explain Yi nationality-themed films, but also the cultural heart of the essence of Yi nationality-themed films. Although the selection of these traditional Spaces may be seen as "pompous" or "fabricated" symbols in the eyes of some audiences, for the majority of Yi people, these contents are an important window for them to look back on the historical and traditional ethnic culture. Similarly, it is also the most important window for non-Yi nationality people to recognize the traditional culture of Yi nationality people of Yi nationality.

2.2. The Space of Modern Life

Film is a reflection of national culture. With the situation of a nation in modern civilization, modern living space can be seen everywhere in the film. For Yi nationality-themed films, pure modern and urban images do not appear; On the contrary, some areas where modern civilization and traditional culture blend -- "small towns" and "small counties" appear more frequently. Small towns have become the spatial signifiers of modern life in Yi nationality-themed films. "Town" and "county" have appeared many times in films such as "Deep Valley Corpse" (1985) and "Camellia Yi Woman" (2011). These modern living Spaces construct the Yi-nationality people's situation between modern urban civilization and traditional culture. To some extent, Modern living space, small towns and counties, build a unique flavor different from other types of films, and the application of these modern Spaces has become the core elements to influence and promote the development of Yi nationality-themed films. After all, the modern living space in Yi nationality-themed films has multiple cultural references. On the one hand, the invasion of modern urban civilization makes the traditional culture of Yi nationality at a loss, which is the focus of many directors; On the other hand, the embarrassing situation of the Yi nationality people in the rapid development of modern industrial civilization and the transformation of the production mode and living habits of the Yi nationality people in the modern urban space are also the focus of the director's attention, both of which have become important reasons for the selection of modern living spaces. It is no doubt that Yi nationality-themed films which focus on modern living space are "the codes" on the images of Yi nationality culture, which maintains the biggest characteristic of Yi nationality culture and realize the integration with other culture and industrial civilization and digs out the full of era characteristics of memory of Yi nationality!

3. Spatial Cultural Expression and Theme Display Yi nationality-themed Films

Ling-ling fang said: "the geography in the process of urban landscape show, are no longer just entangled in the physical and natural environment geography, natural environment, but into spirit and the level of experience. Medium in the process, become an important intermediary" [3]. In this sense, space

selection of Yi nationality-themed films has its own unique cultural connotation and spiritual metaphor, and the selection and application of each space is filled with the purpose of directors. Naturally, the selection of these spaces has become an important dimension for film audiences to gain insight into Yi nationality people's culture.

3.1. The Metaphor of Yi Nationality Identity

The spatial selection of Yi nationality-themed films is undoubtedly an important signifier highlighting "Yi nationality identity". On the one hand, the director's cultural identity or other reasons lead to the fact that all the films are not rooted in the thick culture Yi nationality. Some films use the means of "transplanting" to force the stories into the lives of people of Yi nationality, hoping to complete the narration with the image style of "spectacle" and "defamiliarization". It can be said that the mysterious and folkloric elements in the culture of Yi nationality become the next consumption scene in the context of popular culture. The depiction of Yi nationality people's life and the selection of spatial symbols in the video may be said to arouse the audience's desire for "snooping" with the help of the cultural identity of people of Yi nationality as "others". The images of the people of Yi nationality being oppressed by slave owners and participating in the Anti-Japanese War against spies are sometimes some kinds of "other" writing. The space of Yi nationality only becomes a way of shallow level which only is used to tells the images of the stories of Yi nationality for the audience. But on the other hand, it deserves recognition: for films that really tell the story of culture of Yi nationality, the symbol selection of space of Yi nationality is an important carrier to shape and show the culture of Yi nationality. These films have become important carriers to express national identity and spread the culture of Yi nationality. For example, The Impression of Beiji (2006) and other films have given full play to the cultural metaphor function of space of Yi nationality. In addition, Love of Yi Language (2012) greatly renders and spreads the culture of Yi nationality from the perspective of ethnic characters, and the cultural identity and national consciousness of Yi nationality are obviously presented under the support of space.

3.2. The Expression of "National Unity" and the Identity of The Times

As a nation, The Chinese nation is the most important social and political resource in China. The degree of Chinese national identity and its construction level are directly related to the unity, stability and development of the country. As a kind of media, film art is bound to involve national unity, national construction and other issues. It is inevitable for creators of film art to tell national culture, Chinese stories and times through minority films. From the perspective of the initial waves caused by the release of the first minority-themed film "Spring In Inner Mongolia" which finally is called "Victory of the People of Inner Mongolia", the minority-themed film has undoubtedly attracted much attention in terms of the creation of national unity and the atmosphere of The Times.

"Ethnic unity is the lifeline of the people of all ethnic groups. The cognition, emotion and attitude of various ethnic groups towards the Chinese nation, as well as the resulting sense of belonging, responsibility, mission and pride, is the Chinese national identity." [4] Ethnic minority films reflect the life of ethnic minority groups, which has become the

common concept of film creators. In the development of more than 60 years, Yi nationality-themed films are bound to breath with the times and keep pace with history. Space is a powerful carrier of national characteristics. Therefore, the living space of people of Yi nationality has become an important signifier for the film to construct the social identity of "national unity". The film *Mysterious Traveling Companion* (1955) tells the story of the people of Yi nationality walking hand in hand with the commanders and border defense army to fight against the enemy forces. The shaping of the images of the people of Yi nationality such as "Pan mother" is undoubtedly a vivid description of the people of Yi nationality to fight for the liberation and construction of the motherland. Zhu Linsheng, a young man of Yi nationality, finally realized his wish to serve as a frontier soldier, which highlighted the beautiful vision of people of Yi nationality standing together with the motherland to build the motherland in the context of *The Times*.

4. Analysis of Spatial Construction Path of Yi Nationality-themed Films

In the context of "disappeared regions", Yi nationality-themed films must choose and construct a real living space of Yi nationality to break through and transcend the limitations of geographical space, and build a spiritual space of Yi nationality on the screen. It can be said that in the process of spatial shaping of dislocation and aphasia, Yi nationality-themed films must find a suitable path to embrace their own creative feast.

4.1. Build Unique Audio-visual Symbol Space with National Characteristics

Film is the art of images, audio-visual, so it is an important to choose what kind of picture symbols and sound language to construct film space. In the process of creation, Yi nationality-themed films must try to construct a unique audio-visual symbol space with national characteristics, which is the basic requirement of film creation. In Yi nationality-themed films, the first thing to do is to grasp whether its every twinkle and smile is in line with the Yi nationality people's living habits and cultural situation from the perspective of character image shaping, "*Mountain Walker*" (2018) and "*My Holy Way*" (2015) are to grasp from the character, the hero's every gesture and every step reflects the culture of Yi nationality. If the characters are only labeled with the Yi nationality people's hats without the life characteristics of them, then it is worth pondering whether this film can be called Yi nationality-themed films. Secondly, we should make good use of the symbols of folk culture. Since its birth, the film has been married with the folk culture in a multidimensional sense. The films keep absorbing nutrients from the folk culture. The same characteristics of multiple symbols can construct a unique direction of screen space, which is exactly an important element to construct the film type. Yi nationality people's unique clothing, architecture and customs are all important signifiers to build Yi nationality people's living space. Wooden buildings, big pipes and torch festivals can create the Yi nationality people's space on the screen for the audience, which is the expression and proof of the cultural identity of Yi nationality.

4.2. Turning "Spectacle" Into Paying Attention to the Construction of Image of Cultural Space

When the lens of the film are cast into modern life, it should not show the characteristics of "false" reality. Yi nationality-themed films should not be made into spectacle for the sake of folklore in the creation process. It can be said that the current cultural elements of Yi nationality in the film are divorced from the original cultural features of Yi nationality, and some films only paste some elements of Yi nationality into the films. The Torch festival and other cultural elements of Yi nationality are as a novelty symbol in order to show the ethnic customs. Naturally, film creators have to satisfy some of the audience's movie-watching desires in order to market the box office, which is understandable and understandable. However, even if such illusory spectacle has won the box office and the market, it is absolutely a despair of personal memory for the national masses. Originally, it is expected that the far-away national culture can be reproduced in the image media, but the unimagined images have created an illusory national dream.

Indeed, the current film market has become a paradise of "open-minded". All the wonders that can be consumed have been deeply excavated and stir-fried by capital, waiting for the public to buy tickets. However, Yi nationality-themed films may as well change the creation trend of "curiosity seeking" and "spectacle" to focus on the real cultural space of the film and go deeper into the culture of Yi nationality, just as the unique plain, poetic and rich lifestyle of the people of Yi nationality are the space for the directors of Yi nationality-themed films. Films such as *Camellia Yi Woman* (2012), *Love of Yi Languages* (2012), and *Chigaru* (2013) not only show the audience different ethnic cultures, but also pay attention to the cultural trends and historical connotations of Yi nationality. This selecting method is undoubtedly successful, the cultures of Yi nationality have not become the spectacle of the images.

Today, the space of the film had already become the important factor of narrative and the center of the narrative. How to select and construct the space of Yi nationality-themed films is a big problem facing all creators of Yi nationality-themed films. Only by reasonable construction space of film, sincere attitudes, plain emotion to pay attention to the history and modern living space of Yi nationality, we can better achieve mastery of ethnic culture of Yi nationality, and establish an unique enjoyable space of culture of Yi nationality and let the creation of Yi nationality-themed films further prosperity.

References

- [1] Urqin. *Film Culture of Ethnic Minorities in China* [M]. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2015:46
- [2] Shao Peiren, Yang Liping, *Media Geography as a Study of Cultural Landscape* [M]. Beijing: Communication University of China Press, 2010:58.
- [3] Fang Lingling. *Media Space: Spatial Imagination of Media and Urban Landscape* [M]. Beijing: Communication University of China Press, 2011:236
- [4] Wang Yihua, Liu Kun. *Social Science Front*, 2014 (02) : 263-264.]

- [5] Zhu Yichu, et al. Introduction to Minority Folk Literature [M]. Kunming: Yunnan People's Publishing House, 2016:124
- [6] Qiu Jing. "Liangshan", "Holy Way" and The Reproduction of Folk Customs -- A Case study from the Yi Language film "My Holy Way" [J]. Chinese Art Time and Space, 2017 (03): 18-21.
- [7] Meng Jun. Research on spatial narrative of Chinese contemporary Films [M]. Beijing: Commercial Press International Co., LTD., 2018:21.