

Performance Style under the Traditional Realist Director Concept of Chinese Films in the 1980s

--The Interaction between Daily Life Language and Political Consciousness

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Abstract

At the beginning of the new era, under the traditional realist director concept of Chinese films, the concept of realist performance began to return, and it was concentrated from 1979 to 1980. The speech and actions of Chinese film characters under the concept of traditional realist directors are full of the characteristics of the times and full of political connotations. The political context of movies during this period was constructed with daily lines. Since 1979, the beginning of the new era, the performance concepts of Chinese film directors have tended to return to realism, and their realistic dramatic performance concepts have become more introspective than before. Chinese film performances under the concept of traditional realist directors contain rich political subtext under the surface of life expression, which includes direct political subtext and indirect political subtext. The character intentionally dissolves the political lines under the daily lines and presents them in the form of direct political subtext. The character has no intention of dissolving political lines under daily lines and presents them in the form of indirect political subtext. Therefore, the political dimension of realist performance culture is reflected in the way characters interact with political consciousness through life-like language. This is embodied in the daily language in the political context and the political subtext under the surface of life.

Keywords

Chinese Film, Daily Language, Evening Rain, Pattering Spring-Rain, Political Consciousness, Subtext, Tear-Stain.

1. Introduction

In 1979, at the beginning of a new era, under the traditional realist director concept of Chinese films, the concept of realist performance began to return, and it was concentrated from 1979 to 1980. The realist shift in film performance concepts in 1979 was largely determined by the return of traditional realist director concepts. At the beginning of the new era, along with the discussion of the concept of "de-dramatization", the traditional realist director concept of Chinese films has returned.

The concept of "de-dramatization" has given rise to the return of traditional realist performances in Chinese films, and the aesthetic representation of this return is prominently reflected in the "de-staging" of film performances at this time. The "de-dramatization" of film performances, which is mainly characterized by "de-staging", is actually against false and artificial performances. Its essence is the ideal pursuit of artistic truth.

Film performances under the concept of realist directors have shifted from passionate performance aesthetics to realist performance aesthetics. The reason for this shift is that the

aesthetics of passionate performance are divorced from the aesthetic trend of the times of “seeking truth”.

When dramatic performances under the aesthetics of passionate performance appear in movies, they are divorced from the “truth-seeking” aesthetic trend of the times. Chinese film performances of this period showed traces of dramatic performances. The deliberate weaving of clever plots leads to an obvious sense of artificiality in the performance; the excessive pursuit of dramatic conflicts leads to a lack of logic in the performance; the biased and intensified performance results lead to the simplification of the character’s actions. The traditional concept of realist directing relies on the realistic theater performance method. This is because realistic performance pursues the typical character created by the character and manifests it as a character-based performance; realistic performance also pursues action performance. The new form of performance under the concept of realist director is the “restoration of human beings”. This new form is specifically manifested in the introversion of contradictions and conflicts; the introversion of characters and personalities, and gives collective cultural consciousness and political will to the introversion of performances.

The concept of realist performance is more manifested as the “reform movement” of the concept of dramatic performance. This is related to the dramatic genetic endowment of Chinese film performances. The driving force for the return of the concept of realistic performance comes from the director’s consciousness of innovative style. In the new era, the concept of realist performance has begun to deeply explore dramatic performances and innovate dramatic performance forms. During this period, the dramatic performance of Chinese films manifested itself to a greater extent in the actors’ dependence on dramatic performance methods in creating characters’ inner, while external manifestations tended to be “de-dramatized”. The return of the concept of realist performance has also benefited from the impetus of the debate on conceptual theory, that is, the debate on “de-dramatization” concepts, which is mainly reflected in the two dimensions of film ontology and film performance.

2. Daily Language in Political Context

The speech and actions of Chinese film characters under the concept of traditional realist directors are full of the characteristics of the times and full of political connotations. The political context of movies during this period was constructed with daily lines. *Pattering Spring-Rain* (1979) tells the story of a major political struggle. The construction of political context is an important task of the film. The film uses very life-like lines to set up a dramatic scene for the characters’ actions, and highlights the political implications of the times. *Pattering Spring-Rain* (1979) uses extremely cinematic character dialogue to accurately match the characters’ specific emotions with specific situations.

Outside Jiangzhou Railway Station

The train suddenly stopped, and passengers asked questions.

Che Police: (in a drawl) The proletarian revolutionaries at Jiangzhou Station rebelled... Don't you read the newspaper? "I would rather have socialism late than capitalism on time!"

Gu Xiuming: How long do we have to wait?

Car Police: One hour, half a year.

Although the policeman does not appear many times in the movie, his speech is concise, rich in connotation, and very distinctive. On the one hand, he illuminated the chaotic political environment with his life-like words, and on the other hand, he also reflected the extreme political opinions of the time. He answered the passengers with sarcastic words, his words were full of expressions, and his words contained bitter irony, which not only reflected his immediate anger, but also conveyed his long-term helplessness.

On the train

The radio played Tian'anmen poems that had been tampered with by the "Gang of Four".

Police officer: (speaking bluntly and in a low voice) Is it "sprinkling tears to commemorate heroes" or "sprinkling blood to commemorate heroes"?

Xu Lang: (quickly) "Shedding tears", that's right.

Police officer: (closes the notebook) Thank you! I said so!

The political vocabulary of the "May Fourth Movement" was embedded in the conversation between the police officer and Xu Lang. It can be seen that they both participated in or witnessed this movement. In a quick conversation of questions and answers, the two seemed to be like-minded even though they were strangers.

On the train

The policeman stuffed the notebook into Xu Lang's bag.

Police officer: (in an emotionless tone) Be careful, there is a thief at the station!

The police officer's words contained puns and his emotionless tone expressed his disappointment and helplessness in the larger political context; "thief" was his derogatory term for political agents, which expressed his resentment towards the agents' rampage; "Be careful", which expresses his concern for his "comrades".

In *Pattering Spring-Rain* (1979), the characters are talking about things in life, and their speech and actions are life-like; however, the characters' words unintentionally construct a political context. This undoubtedly reflects the national theme of a specific era. During the "Cultural Revolution", politics became the primary topic of the country. At the same time, the characters' daily lines not only reflect their physiological mood, but also reflect their political mood.

in room 22

Chen Yang revealed his identity to Gu Xiuming, and Gu Xiuming was shocked.

Gu Xiuming: (long breath) You should take medicine!

Chen Yang: (eagerly) Please listen to me, please leave me. Didn't Dr. Zhao explain to you who I am?

Gu Xiuming: Take medicine.

Chen Yang: (in a low voice) Being with me will only hurt you!

Gu Xiuming: I only know how to escort a patient named Li Min. I don't know about Chen Yang!

Chen Yang: But it's me who the public security officers want to arrest!

Gu Xiuming thought of something, her heart suddenly tightened, and she frowned in pain.

Gu Xiuming: (dumbly, lips trembling) Please take the medicine first!

"Take medicine" appears repeatedly in the above dialogue. Although this directly shows that Gu Xiuming is fulfilling her duties as a nurse, it also implies the intense activities in her heart. As Gu Xiuming went through "taking medicine - taking medicine - taking medicine" over and over again, her psychology experienced changes such as shock - struggle - pain - determination. A simple and repeated sentence is Gu Xiuming's verbal expression regarding his fateful decision in the political context of the "Cultural Revolution".

Xu Lang's family

Xu Lang: (calmly)...The harsh struggle will recombine the intimacy between people!

...

Gu Xiuming: (slowly) Struggle sometimes leads the people closest to us to take completely opposite paths.

Xu Lang's words greatly inspired Gu Xiuming and improved her understanding of this political struggle. When she used these words to persuade Feng Chunhai, it was a warning to him and a declaration of her determination to fight, which showed a leap in her thinking.

Audiovisual language is the ontological language of the film, and lines are the auxiliary language of the film. The nature of film photography determines the conciseness and action requirements of the lines. Chinese movie lines under the concept of traditional realist directors are rich in life-like characteristics. They not only directly express the character's action intentions, but also implicitly express the character's psychological ups and downs. They can even construct the political context of the times and convey political awareness.

3. The Political Subtext beneath the Surface of Life

Since 1979, the beginning of the new era, the performance concepts of Chinese film directors have tended to return to realism, and their realistic dramatic performance concepts have become more introspective than before. In this way, film performances of this period attached great importance to the role of subtext in shaping the character's psychology and expressing social content. "The reason why language and character lines are valuable is not because of itself, but because of the content or subtext it contains." Chinese film performances under the concept of traditional realist directors contain rich political subtexts under the surface of life expression.

3.1. Direct Political Subtext

The character intentionally dissolves the political lines under the daily lines and presents them in the form of direct political subtext. In *Tear-Stain* (1979), the confrontation between the Standing Committee and the Standing Committee is the most prominent and sharp conflict scene in the film. Xu Feixiong and Yu Shaokang were making insinuations and insinuations, while Zhang Wei was conciliating openly and provoking secretly. At this time, the outspoken Hua Ruyu was aggressive towards him, and conflicts were about to break out. Hua Ruyu asked Xu Feixiong: "Who are you referring to?" Zhu Keshi answered: "Of course it refers to me." The subtext here is on the surface "I can bear it, come on back, I'm right here." But his political identity as county party secretary gave this subtext a political connotation. This is a struggle between the force of justice represented by Zhu Keshi and the forces of the "Gang of Four". At the same time, Zhu Keshi leaned on the sofa, took a puff of cigarette, and spoke calmly, which showed the confidence and aboveboardness of the force of justice. Similarly, in the interrogation scene of Kong Nina, Lu Mingyuan and Zhu Keshi did not believe that she was a lunatic. Zhu Keshi's call of "Comrade Kong Nina" broke her heart that had been closed for many years. "Comrade Kong Nina" and read "comrade" forcefully, the subtext is "please stop pretending to be crazy". The political meaning behind it is not only class reconciliation, but also the practice of bringing order out of chaos within the people. "Comrades" reclassified those who were persecuted during the "Cultural Revolution" into the same class and united them around the party to eliminate the forces of the "Gang of Four". At the same time, it also shows that Chinese Communists represented by Zhu Keshi have sufficient ability to resolve conflicts among the people and unite all forces that can be united to implement the spirit of the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Party. The film *Tear-Stain* (1979) expresses the political subtext with life-like lines, hiding the political discourse of a specific era in class feelings and comradeship feelings, and expressing the warmth of the party.

3.2. Indirect Political Subtext

The character has no intention of dissolving political lines under daily lines and presents them in the form of indirect political subtext. In a scene between Qiu Shi and Xing Hua in *Evening Rain* (1980), Qiu Shi asked Xing Hua with concern, "Your name is Xing Hua, right?" And Qiu Shi said to Xing Hua, "Eat a little." Next, Qiu Shi whispered to Xinghua: "Be careful about your health when traveling far away, and don't let the person who sends you worry." Qiu Shi's three short life-like words to Xinghua did not convey the direct intention of political subtext, but conveyed

the human concern for “as a fallen person from afar” and conveyed the psychological subtext full of humane spirit. Qiu Shi learned the girl’s name through careful observation, and the subtext contained in it was “Girl, I understand your situation, you have to be strong.” The next subtext was “No matter how hard life is, you must work hard to survive.” The subtext is “There are still many people who care about you, don’t lose confidence in life.” At the same time, although Xinghua did not respond with a word, her body movements and facial expressions conveyed her psychological reaction of shock and comfort, and conveyed her psychological subtext. Although the character does not intend to directly convey political subtext, there is an indirect political subtext hidden in his daily lines. Qiu Shi is a poet who was persecuted by the “Cultural Revolution” and is an active counter-revolutionary who “may be sentenced to death”; Xinghua is a desperate and helpless rural girl who sells herself to pay off her debts. “In the past few years, we have been engaged in political movements all day long, and no one is engaged in production. The work points are only a few cents a day...” The reason why Xinghua is desperate is hidden in the lines. The “Cultural Revolution” was the political reason for the two people’s mutual sympathy. The political subtext of the “Gang of Four” being so tyrannical that the people are in dire straits is indirectly conveyed in the depths of the characters’ daily lines.

4. Conclusion

The cultural implications of the concept of realist performance are mainly reflected in the dimensions of time, politics, gender and other dimensions. Physical movements and verbal movements with clear motivations for action are a method of realistic performance that uses dramatic performance to create typical characters. Under the concept of realist directors in the new era, Chinese films use performance cultural elements such as the space of the times, sad characters, and tragic stories to demonstrate the performance cultural implications of scars, reflections, and humanity. Therefore, the cultural temperament of the times of realist performance culture is mainly manifested as scar performance culture, reflective performance culture and humanitarian performance culture, which are completed by physical actions and verbal actions. The political dimension of realist performance culture is reflected in the way characters interact with political consciousness through life-like language. This is embodied in the daily language in the political context and the political subtext under the surface of life.

Politics is an important theme in the traditional realist works of Chinese films represented from 1979 to 1980. During this period, Chinese film dramatic performances needed to get rid of the “stage-oriented” disease of Chinese film dramatic performances during the “Cultural Revolution” period. Straightforward, slogan-like, and slogan-like political discourse communication is no longer a trend in Chinese films after the return of realist performances. In this way, political consciousness is hidden by daily speech and actions, or the political context is constructed by daily lines, or the political subtext is hidden by daily lines, all of which deepen the depth of realist performances in Chinese films in the new era. During this period, the concept of “de-dramatization” promoted changes in Chinese film performance styles, and film performances under the concept of traditional realist directors presented a realist aesthetic style.

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