

On the Dilemma of Female Survival in Balloon

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Abstract

As a Tibetan director, Wanma Caidan has been committed to recording the social reality of Tibet with his lens. The film Balloon is a new attempt and breakthrough for him. The film's lighthearted and witty stories address weighty social issues. The dualistic conflict between religion and reality, the sinking and rebellion of characters' fates, are the inescapable motif of this land. The light balloon carries Wan Ma Caidan's deep concern and heavy thinking about the current social situation of Tibetan women.

Keywords

Balloon; Wan Ma CAI Dan; Reproductive rights; Survival dilemma.

1. The Narrative Center of Balloon

Wan Ma Caidan, a Tibetan director who has been active in the Chinese film industry in recent years, won the 30th Huading Award for Best Director of China on August 7, 2021 with his film Balloon, which is adapted from his novel of the same name. At the beginning, he entered the public eye. Born in 1969 in the Hainan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Qinghai Province, Wan Ma Caidan began to write literary works in 1991. He published his debut novel Temptation in 1997, and began to write realistic novels based on Tibet.

As a Tibetan director, Wanma Caidan has been committed to making Tibetan films and telling Tibetan stories. He shot a series of Tibetan-themed works, such as Quiet Mani Stone (2005), The Search for Wisdom and Beauty Gendeng (2007), Snow in Bayan Khara (2008) and Killed a Sheep (2019), and the magic-realistic Balloon (2020). Wanma Caidan completed a journey to find the roots of Tibetan culture, and also built a fantastic Tibetan world. No matter it is Mani stone, Tibetan mastiff, temple or women, Wanma Caidan's eyes focus on specific things in Tibet, but the presentation of Balloon reflects the germination of his consciousness of problems. It is far from enough to just show the real life in Tibet. He shifted the center and flashpoint to reflect the ideological root of the current situation of Tibetan society. The female consciousness is a breakthrough of Wan Ma Caidan's ideology, and also a new starting point of his film and television works.

Religion and women have always been controversial topics, one is consistent with civilization, the other is leading to reproduction. Since ancient times, regardless of Chinese, Western and ethnic groups, women's right to speak and survival has been squeezed by men. No matter in politics, business, literature or military affairs, the proportion of men in top positions is much higher than that of women. At the same time, feminism has always been a realistic social topic that is easy to be criticized. Although Wan Ma Caidan's Balloon is a story of Tibet in the 1990s, it is still an inspiration for today's social development. The society and the public need to pay attention to this topic area. The realistic dilemma of religious belief, the popularization of sex education, and the release of female living space are not only the reality faced by Tibetans, but also the current social status.

The author tries to focus on the topic of reproductive freedom in the film based on the reality and the film and television combined with reality, starting from three parts: reproductive rights, female characters and realistic predicament.

2. Binary Conflict in Balloon

2.1. The conflict between religion and reality

Family planning policy is the social background of the development of the film. The contradiction and conflict point of the story is that the birth policy is directly related to whether the Jinba family has a fourth child, which also leads to the divergence of opinions and escalation of contradictions. In July 1971, the family planning policy was officially put into practice, bringing the target of controlling population growth into the national economic development plan for the first time. For a long time, this has also become a basic state policy of China. The film is set in the 1990s, when the Communist Party and the state launched a nationwide family planning policy, which was introduced in Tibetan areas in response to the national call. However, due to the remote location of Tibetan areas, the people's honest thinking, the backward medical level, and even the influence of Tibetan Buddhist thoughts such as reincarnation, the family planning policy in Tibet has been difficult to carry out, which directly affects the social life of people in Tibetan areas. "Birth control is not widely available in Tibet's traditional nomadic communities, the family planning policy has not been relaxed, and the production structure of Tibetan families is mainly to expand their own family structure, which is typically characterized by the fertility of women of working age." The birth policy is difficult to carry out.

Against this backdrop, Droga in Balloon faces the same fertility dilemma. In the early 1980s, China put forward opinions on the birth policy of ethnic minorities because of the distribution of large and small communities in which ethnic minorities live. In the document, it was specified that the couples of farmers and herdsmen of remote ethnic minorities could, upon approval, in principle have three children in one family, and they would be fined for having more than three children. It made life difficult for the Darger family, which already had three children. Tibet's conservative culture, poor access to contraception and sex education, and her husband's incontinence led Zhuoma to get free condoms from the town's health clinic. For convenience, Zhuoma hid the condom under the pillow, not taking into account that the two children might find that even if the son asked what it was, they just fudges it to "balloon", the two children believe it is true, quietly carrying their mother to blow with "balloon" play, which is also the fuse of the later series of stories. When the only condom is stolen, her father dies suddenly, and Zhuoga becomes pregnant unexpectedly, the impoverished family is thrown into a dilemma, and the story reaches its climax with irreconcilable conflicts between the loving couple.

The story is simple, but the focus of the whole issue strikes at a weighty social reality: women's reproductive freedom. In Tibetan areas, women's social status presents a polarizing situation. Due to religious factors, some primitive myths about the female ancestor spread in Tibet, which indirectly led to the extreme worship of women. On the other hand, as in the inland tradition, women have always been regarded as subordinate to men, under the afterglow of a patriarchal society, and with the harsh climate and difficult existence of the snowy plateau, labor has become important and valuable. Only after women reorganize their families to have children can their social value and family value gradually become prominent and their status slowly recover. This directly leads to women's low social status. Fertility has become the biggest weight of the embodiment of female value. Recognizing this social reality, Wan Ma Tsedan focuses the issue on women's reproductive rights in the film.

2.2. The question of reproductive freedom

Tibetan people's religious belief throughout the film. In the movie, the eldest child, Jiang Yang, is firmly believed to be the reincarnation of his grandmother because he has the same mole on his left shoulder. This is why the whole family is opposed when Zhuoga tries to abort the child believed to be the reincarnation of his grandfather. Several scenes in the film show Droga struggling and having several awakenings.

Zhuoga's first awakening came when she turned to a female doctor, Zhou Cuo, after becoming pregnant. The doctor suggested Zhuoga to induce labor and told Zhuoga about the disadvantages of having too many children based on her own experience. Zhuoga was already hesitant at this time, longing for the courage like Dr. Zhou Cuo and being able to control her own destiny. When she was washing her face, Zhuoga suddenly stared at her reflection in a daze. Zhuoga recalled her youth and the joy on her face when she got married. At that time, she was carefree and did not have to worry about her future livelihood and difficult family. Basin to see his face because of the vicissitudes of life, a compromise and did not get a happy life, last night because and her husband disagree, but for her husband's violence, at this time Zhuoga began to think about the correctness of the decision. Then she found the meaning of pursuing self-worth from the bottom of her heart. Women also need to revitalize themselves, not just a tool for reproduction. Droga quietly goes to town to prepare for the abortion operation, this courage is no less than "Nala ran away", she needs to find her own strength and free herself. However, her husband and son arrive suddenly, and even the son urges her to keep the child, who will surely be a burden to the family, regardless of the mother's suffering. Zhuoga is shocked and finally cries out. It was also Droga's third awakening, and she began to rethink her destiny. Zhuoga's heart is extremely suffering, wavering between belief and reality. The difficult choice she faces is the epitome of the real life of Tibetan women, and Zhuoga's choice also predicts the liberation and destruction of Tibetan women.

In Chinese history and culture, the oppression of women is often under the name of the Three Principles, the Five Constants and the admonishment of female morality. Due to religious and cultural factors, women in Tibetan areas are also oppressed by theocracy in addition to the power of husband. These four ropes are also constraining the throats of the Tibetan people. Zhuoga's fourth child has attracted attention from many groups. Not only her husband, but also her dearest sister and favorite son decided the fate of the fourth child, regardless of her wishes, just because the master said, The spirit of the father will soon return to the family. Jiang Yang is identified as the reincarnation of grandma, family people especially the husband more firmly believe that the fourth child must be the reincarnation of grandpa. When Droga decided to abort her child and questioned that "masters are sometimes at fault," many people came forward to criticize her harshly. Darger said angrily, "How could the master be wrong," "You demon," "You will be punished for thinking so." His sister, who had been dependent on him, also advised, "Since the spirit of the dead has chosen your body, how painful it must be for him to refuse his birth!" The son Jiang Yang also begged his mother, "Give birth to the baby in my stomach. I want my grandfather to come home." Zhuoga's body was subject to divine, paternal and even paternal intervention. Three mountains on top of her.

As a carrier of life, women are regarded as fertility machines by some individuals dominated by male chauvinists, which also makes the survival value of women simply boil down to fertility tools by some male chauvinists, which greatly weakens or even degrades the female group. In primitive society, survival resources were limited, and land and women were the property contested by tribes. Women determined the reproduction of tribes, but also the rise and fall of tribes. In the ideas of the ancestors, reproduction is very important, is the inheritance of blood, the continuation of civilization. Social development so far, backward thinking has made obvious progress, women's reproductive rights have been liberated, reproductive or not, depends on

the mother's own will, is no longer under the control of others, more free from power oppression.

2.3. The choice between sinking and resisting

The other two women in the film, Zhou Cuo and Zhuoga's sister Zhuoma, are representatives of two different groups of women. They are the result of different life paths and realistic choices. The three women represent different groups of women in Tibetan areas, and their different life fates together form the life group image of Tibetan women. And behind these three female roles also contains the director's deep symbolic significance.

In contrast to Zoga, the fate of the other two women is the key point of the film, which is also the central value of the theme. Zhou Cuo is undoubtedly the representative of the role of women in the new era. She has received higher education and has a stable job to realize her life value. Besides, she is independent and forward-thinking. At the same time, she is eager to help other ordinary women in Tibetan areas, eager to guide them on the road to independence, and persuade Zhuoga to make her own reproductive rights, not become a fertility machine. In the film, Dr. Zhou Cuo undoubtedly assumes the identity of "voice". In the face of the collective "voice loss" of women's reproductive oppression in the history of Tibetan areas, Dr. Zhou Cuo complained, and encouraged other women trapped in the swamp oppression to speak out together and bravely say no. Wan Ma CAI Dan borrow Zhou Cuo's mouth to express their own appeal. The existence of Zhou Cuo is a new way out that Wan Ma Caidan sought or pointed out in the real predicament. Women can live freely and independently, and have the right to choose life and dominate fate.

In the film, the story of Zhuoma's younger sister is not clear. Only through her sporadic conversations with her old lover, and her sister's several attempts to stop speculation, can we judge what Zhuoma's younger sister might have gone through. Why she chose to become a nun, why she resolutely prevented her sister from having an abortion, and why Zhuoga was so angry about her sister's reencounter with her old lover. From the sister tangled, dilemma emotional situation, in fact, can infer Zhuoma experienced things. Perhaps she was in the same dilemma at the time, having an unmarried child with her fiancé was despised by her family, and she finally chose to have an abortion. And killing living things is the biggest sin in Buddhism. Privately aborting and destroying a life made Zhuoma feel remorse and sin. Then she became a nun and left home to practice. Want to make up for their SINS through penance, not to harm the family, to achieve their own redemption. My sister is undoubtedly the victim of religious thoughts in the old times. Because free love is not allowed by the secular world, she can no longer marry freely because of the destruction of Qing reputation. Her love with her first love also ends, and she completely loses confidence in life. She was willing to be shaved to Ni, to be a pure practitioner, to go to the temple to make good friends, and to accompany the ancient Qingdeng Buddha for life, to atone for the SINS of this world. The life of a flower girl was completely destroyed by old-fashioned Buddhist ideas.

Sinking or resisting is the dilemma in Zhuoga's mind, which also determines the fate of the characters. But in fact, the film has already given the results of different fate choices, and the three women respectively predict different endings, which is the director's intention and the result of the prominent female consciousness.

3. The Prominence of Female Consciousness

Since the founding of New China, with the development of women's liberation movement and the promotion of gender equality, women's status and legal rights have been gradually improved. According to the 2004 Human Development Report, there is data on the proportion of women in politics. The proportion of Chinese women and men in politics is 20.8, compared

with 8.8 in India. Among Asian countries, China is regarded as a country that respects women's rights and interests and protects women's interests. A law has even been enacted, expressly stipulating that women's "political rights, cultural and educational rights, labor and social security rights, property rights, personal rights, marriage and family rights and other legal rights" shall not be harmed. Female power should be valued and respected, but the fact is that women in most cases under the shadow of men, covered up, ignored, covered, forgotten, so that the secular cognition of women will stay in the "long hair, short knowledge" such stereotype image. In addition to the promotion of social system, national government and other external policies, the complete liberation of women needs the awakening of women themselves. Instead of being educated by fools and religious thoughts, women are willing to become the objects of oppression, and gradually become willing to be confined to the family.

As one of the 56 ethnic groups in China, the Tibetan compatriots are no exception. The status and legal rights of women have also undergone great social changes from low to high and from nothing to nothing. But serfdom in Tibet caused deep oppression in the land still suffering the poor people living in this snowy plateau. The peaceful liberation of Tibet and the overthrow of serfdom also brought about significant changes in the social status of traditional Tibetan women. However, there are still many Tibetan writers and Tibetan life or Han writers who have created a large number of works to record the arduous history in the form of text or film. Wan Ma Tsenden is one of them. As a Tibetan director, Wanma Caidan has been committed to making Tibetan films about Tibet. However, there are still many Tibetan writers and Tibetan life or Han writers who have created a large number of works to record the arduous history in the form of text or film. Wan Ma Tsenden is one of them. As a Tibetan director, Wanma Caidan has been committed to making Tibetan films and telling Tibetan stories.

Wan Ma Caidan uses lenses to convey his hometown to the public. In his film and television works, he abandons complicated photography methods and adopts a large number of fixed lenses and long lenses, forming a photography aesthetic with very personal characteristics. The tone of the film is always very strong color contrast, the picture presents a cool tone, and the use of imagery. On the vast plateau, the color sense of religion will come to the face in a narrow and strong way. In the loneliness full of ritual sense, the picture treatment is calm and cold, directly touching the heart, making the viewer feel as if they are in a distant mysterious snow field. The cool color is not only an expression of calm thinking emotion, but also a side foil to the difficult plight of Tibetan women. It is the confusion between women's reproductive rights and religious reincarnation.

At the end of the film there is an intriguing scene in which Darger, the father, goes out to buy red balloons for his two children. Two children were playing on the open grassland, full of joy and freedom. When they were playing, they loosened the rope of the balloon. One red balloon burst, and the other one flew into the sky, the fiery red color seemed to be incompatible with the desolate monotonous world. The ending of the two balloons also indicates the director's faith in the future fate of women. The director hopes that more people can see the sky and see that women can pursue liberation, which is the release of women's hearts and sublimation of thought. At the end of the film, only Zhuoga returned to the temple with her sister, and there was a slow shot in which Zhuoga and her sister looked up at the gate of the temple and saw the red balloon flying into the blue sky. However, the director did not explain the ending of the fourth child. The conflict between the born and the unborn seemed not so important at this moment, leaving enough space for the audience to imagine.

4. Conclusion

In today's society, feminism and feminism are on the rise. However, The Times are constantly changing, and women's thoughts in the new era are increasingly deeply liberated, constantly

pursuing self-control and personal choice. Balloon is a film full of conflicts and contradictions. The impact and shock brought by scientific and technological progress to traditional Tibetan areas stimulate the originally quiet social life of Tibetan people. The pulse of social development brings pains of The Times to this peaceful land. Wanma Caidan is not only the pioneer of Tibetan films, but also the disseminator of Tibetan culture.

Feminism has always been a controversial and realistic social topic, but it should not be discussed by fewer and fewer people just because this topic is sharp and sensitive. Although Wan Ma Tsedan's Balloon is set in the 1990s, it still has implications for today's society. The society and the public need to pay attention to this topic area. The realistic dilemma of religious belief, the popularization of sex education, and the release of female living space are not only the reality faced by Tibetans, but also the current social status. The development and progress of society is to be promoted by a batch of people who dare to face up to it. The author does not oppose Tibetan Buddhism, but rather respects and reveres it. However, no group or citizen should hold high the banner of religious belief to cover up the nature of female oppression.

The film uses balloons as the image, connecting reproductive freedom, basic education, family planning, reincarnation, feminism and other powerful social topics. In the film, there are a lot of conflicts between tradition and reality, as well as the dilemma between religion and science. From these clips, it can be clearly seen that the thought lag of the people in Bian Tibet and the underdeveloped local science at the end of the last century. This is undoubtedly the director's deep thinking on the social environment with the help of the mirror image. The liberation of modern thoughts is a major obstacle to the implementation of the family planning policy and the liberation of people's minds.

On the title page of Wan Ma Tsedan's literary work "Ujin's Teeth," there is a small line that reads, "I long to tell the story of my hometown in my own way, a more authentic hometown that has been blown by the wind." Wan Ma Tsedan has always hoped to show the Tibetan world to the public in a documentary way, so that more people can see Tibet, and he succeeded. We look forward to seeing more works of literature and art produced by Tibetan writers, which are not only popular within the Tibetan community. No matter what form it takes, it is to speak for the Tibetan community, record Tibetan stories and emotions, and let more readers know about the Tibetan people, Tibetan culture and different literary world.

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