

Cultural Memory Construction Strategy of 'Inheriting China'

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ABSTRACT

Peking Operaculture promoted by Beijing Satellite TV program 'Inheriting China' is the quintessence of Chinese traditional culture, and an important part of its cultural inheritance comes from the historical retrospection of collective memory. The program uses the resources in the media space to construct the cultural memory, including retaining the memory of the ancient charm of the old theater, making the Peking Opera artists appear on stage with the help of star effect to generate imitative memory, and making the audience actively participate in the interactive channel of the program in the form of the integration of traditional media and new media, thus broadening the understanding and memory breadth of the opera culture, and providing ideas and reference for enhancing the cultural consciousness of the audience and creating a new form of communication.

Keywords: 'Inheriting China' media space cultural memory

1. INTRODUCTION

Peking Opera, the most far-reaching drama in China, is known as the "quintessence of the country". At the same time, as one of the three major performance systems in the world, it was approved by the State Council to be included in the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage in 2006, bearing heavy cultural memory. 'Inheriting China', as a large scale Peking Operacultural heritage program created by Beijing Satellite TV in 2018, is the third season of the "Inheritor" series. The program invited hundreds of famous opera artists, Peking Opera instrumentalists and a number of performing stars dedicated to the promotion of Peking Opera culture. In the program, the stars learned a classic play in three days by learning from famous artists, and finally completed a public performance on the stage. The program makes rational use of the star effect to gather popularity. In the process of watching the program, to a certain extent, it can enhance the audience's awareness of the cultural memory contained in the quintessence of Peking Opera, and cultivate the public's sense of cultural belonging, thus consolidating and enhancing their confidence in Chinese traditional culture.

2. SPACE: THE MEMORY OF RECONSTRUCTED OBJECTS

In 1920, French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs put forward the concept of "collective memory". "Collective memory" is constructed by individuals rooted in a group situation, which is constrained in a certain social framework and exists in the aggregate composed of people, and individuals can recall or reproduce the past with reference to this situation. Jan Assmann, a German scholar, further deepened his theoretical connotation on the basis of inheriting Halbwachs's "collective memory": "collective memory" can be divided into "transactive memory" and "cultural memory". The former refers to limited memories existing in people's daily communication and interaction, while the latter refers to an external dimension of human memory and represents a cultural identity. The external dimension of memory can be summed up in four forms: physical memory, imitative memory, transactive memory and cultural memory.^[1] Cultural memory, as a kind of inheritance of social consciousness, can also include the first three dimensions in a certain range.

The image needs a wake-up space to be materialized, and a collective experience time to be instantaneous,^[2] so it is usually displayed in a specific way, and people's memories of objects constitute a part of the space, such

as houses for families or villages for farmers, and the world of objects provides a stable support system for the spatial framework of this memory. On the symbolic level, it forms an organic community with the group space. Even if this group breaks away from its original space, it will stick to this community through the symbolic reconstruction of its sacred place.^[3]

Peking Opera was inherited from the reign of Qianlong Gengshu in the Qing Dynasty (that is, in 1790 AD). With the four Anhui classes entering Beijing by imperial edict, Peking Opera, Erhuang, Luoluo, Bangzi, Kunqu Opera and Qin Opera began to merge. During Jiaqing and Daoguang years, Chu Diao performed in Beijing, and Hui Ban learned from its strong points, thus forming the confluence of Erhuang Opera, Xipi Opera, Kunqu Opera and Qin Opera. At that time, it was called "Pihuang Opera", the predecessor of Peking Opera. Because it was located in the capital, its voice tone was inevitably influenced by Beijing dialect, so it was also called "Peking Opera". Peking Opera has a long history. As a cultural symbol, it has a unique and standardized form of artistic expression. At the same time, the "collective memory" contained in Peking Opera needs to be presented by some material carriers. For Peking Opera fans, the "objects" in the play are not only objects themselves, but also memories of themselves, the past and ancestors. Peking Opera can reproduce a time index through the reconstruction of "the world of objects", which points to the past together with "the present".

'Inheriting China' draws lessons from the layout of Peking Opera troupes in the Republic of China. Troupes is another name for the opera team in the old days. The troupes usually has a theater, a stage, a dressing room and a backstage. The division of labor is divided into seven lines and seven subjects. The seven lines are: sheng, dan, jing, clown, military, handyman and errandboy. The seven subjects are: business executive, orchestra, costume supervisor, makeup man, field inspection personnel, opera promoter and hatbox keeper. As a large-scale Peking Opera cultural heritage program, 'Inheriting China' has set up an "Inheritance Club" to correspond to the old troupes, a star reality show to correspond to the "Celebrity lead the troupe" system, and the modern stage corresponding to the traditional stage. It also retains the original appearance of the old theater, such as the dressing room and backstage layout. Even in the process of the program, opera selection, storytelling, art learning, singing, dressing and singing are strictly in accordance with Peking Opera.

The classic repertoire of Peking Opera also carries the memories of a generation. Music is composed of musical symbols, and its movement form is sound, and sound must be transmitted through media, that is, it can be deduced from the physical level that music is material. 'Inheriting China' is divided into ten programs: the first program of "Losing a Son and Being Crazy" is

the representative work of Shang School, the second program "Return of the Phoenix" is a classic repertoire of Mei School, the third program is "Village of Pearl Curtain", a masterpiece of Yuan Zaju, the fourth program is the famous folk myth "The Legend of the White Snake", the fifth program is the masterpiece of Xun School "Matchmaker", the sixth program is Zhang School's masterpiece "Wangjiang Pavilion", the seventh program is "The Emperor and the Concubine" by Mei School, the eighth program is the classic monkey show "Adventures in the Heavenly Palace", the ninth program is Cheng School's masterpiece "The Lucky Purse", and the tenth program is Tan School's pioneering work "The Battle of Dingjunshan". For those Peking Opera fans who keep the classics in their hearts, it is these "memories of objects" that build their own reappearance of the glorious years to some extent.

3. Star effect: promoting imitation memory

The dimension of "imitation memory" involves human behavior patterns. People usually learn and act in imitation. For example, we always use text guides like product manuals, recipes and manufacturing process and instructions.^[4] This is an acquired ability, and it is difficult to classify it systematically. The areas covered by daily behaviors and customs are based on the tradition of "imitation".

'Inheriting China' brilliantly superimposes opera culture and star effect, and becomes the most eye-catching link in the program mode. Tan Zhengyan, the seventh generation descendant of Tan School, and Wang Peiyu, the "boss of Yu", are the finale figures, serving as the president of the "Inheritance Club". While ensuring professionalism, the program group strongly invited three generations of famous guests from the old, middle and young who are familiar to people on the screen to take part in the program as "class hosts", including Liu Xiaoqing after the 50s, Xu Fan, Benny Chan (Hong Kong, China) and Richie Jen (Taiwan Province, China) after the 60s, Qu Ying, Jin Qiaoqiao and Yang Yuying after the 70s, and Cao Yunjin, Li Yixiao, Yu Shaoqun and Bai Kainan after the 80s, with the purpose is to attract audiences of all ages to enhance the attention of the program.

The aesthetic threshold of Peking Opera audience is quite high, and the performers' stage movements are also very strict. Among the above-mentioned stars, except Yu Shaoqun and Xu Fan, who have certain basic skills in opera, others are just like a blank sheet of paper, and they all need to learn Peking Opera from scratch. However, for ordinary audiences who have no foundation at all, they can feel close to each other. While watching their rehearsal bit by bit, they can also learn some opera rules from them. For example, Peking Opera pays attention to making costumes and props based on characters' personalities, and there are six

forms of Lao Dan's mustache alone; The Legend of the White Snake attaches importance to the sole exercise of the White Snake, and shapes its graceful figure with the gait of "boat step" and "cloud step". There are many ways to throw water sleeves: beating sleeves, front sleeves, back sleeves, shoulder sleeves, standing shoulder sleeves, lying shoulder sleeves, round sleeves, etc. When a star actor leaves the "comfort zone" with his own aura and comes to a brand-new and unfamiliar "learning zone", maladjustment and various challenges will follow one after another. In this process, the program not only shows the audience that the star is also a "human" side, but when overcoming difficulties through his own efforts, it will form an appeal and appeal to its potential fans. At the same time, the audience can have a better sense of bringing in when watching the stars "learn art": "All of us are blank papers. They can learn, so can we", and then follow their idols to remember and learn subtly.

For those Peking Opera lovers who have many years of experience in watching operas, their excitement lies not in the star beginners of 'Inheriting China', but in another "Big Shot" set up in the program: Peking Opera masters with higher qualifications in the industry will act as tutors and give lectures to the star in person. There are four major schools of Peking Opera: Mei (Mei Lanfang), Shang (Shang Xiaoyun), Cheng (Cheng Yanqiu) and Xun (Xun Huisheng). In the first issue, the program group invited Shang Xiaoyun's granddaughter Shang Huimin. In the second and fourth periods, Mei Lanfang's disciples Dong Yuanyuan and Li Yufu were invited. In the fifth issue, Xun Huisheng's disciples Song Changrong and Sun Yumin were invited. In the ninth issue, Chi Xiaoqiu, a famous Cheng School scholar, was invited. In addition, the program also invited Zhang Xuezhi, a descendant of Zhang School, famous elderly Tan Xiaoceng and Chen Zhiqing, famous clown Kou Chunhua and Lu Kunshan, famous young Li Hongtu, famous military Li Guang, and others to help out. It can be said that the stars are gathering and shining. Opera fans are collective subjects based on the cultural identity of Peking Opera, and the significance of Peking Opera to them has surpassed the universal significance of chasing stars. Because of this, they don't focus their aesthetic eyes on the "beginner" star like the ordinary audience, but focus their aesthetic eyes on the higher-level Peking Opera performing artists, and unconsciously imitate them in their minds when commenting and recalling the artists' postures and vocals.

In the process of 'Inheriting China' focusing on the "star effect", three "imitative memories" have been generated: First, the imitation of the demonstration actions of Peking Opera teachers by the star guests. Second, the imitation of the rules and customs of the stars "learning art" by ordinary audiences. And third, the imitation of famous performers' performances by opera

fans. The Peking Opera culture is condensed in the ceremony, and people's actions are repeated, so that "imitative memory" can be constructed in practice, and flow and pass on in the construction.

4. MEDIA FUSION: EXPANDING MEMORY HORIZONTALLY IN INTERACTION

According to Jan Assmann's theory, "transactive memory" comes from the interaction between people and others. It is composed of people's past experience and knowledge, and exists in the form of personal experience or paraphrased by others. It is a kind of "non-externalized" formal memory that builds ties through horizontal connection.^[5]

In the program 'Inheriting China', "transactive memory" mainly appears in the form of "media integration", which means the integration of traditional media TV and new media. 'Inheriting China' not only takes Beijing Satellite TV as its main broadcast position, but also chooses to cooperate with Tencent, Youku, iQiyi and many other online video platforms (there are also moving videos on bilibili), and chooses Sina Weibo as the announcement platform, and publishes announcements and official tidbits on time to win over sticky fans. This online and offline effort speeds up the dissemination and update speed, which is more in line with the current young people's demand for convenient and efficient information. At the same time, it also breaks the time and space constraints, so that viewers can log on to any platform, choose their own time slots and have the right to play in a loop. In March, 2018, with the exclusive support of Beijing Capital Airport, 'Inheriting China' also held a public welfare activity of "Inheriting China, Great China", and performed the programs "The Heavenly Maids Scatter Blossoms", "Winter Jasmine" and "Drunken Beauty" at T3 Terminal, which was vigorously promoted by all media in Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China. Nine online platforms were broadcast live simultaneously and five short video platforms were pushed all over the station. The total number of online users exceeded 2 million. Individual memory forms a kind of "transactive memory" through sharing with the group, and "transactive memory" relies on the multi-channel communication form of the media to stimulate more audiences to participate, thus contributing to the composition of this memory.

In addition, the second notable feature of "media convergence" is the deepening of interactive forms. Every program of 'Inheriting China' invites Peking Opera professionals to comment on the performance at the performance site to form an "internal interaction". In the process of guest communication, the host leads the topic to the cultural inheritance of the national quintessence, so that the audience on the scene and

those off the screen can gradually get to know and understand Peking Opera culture, and on this basis, arouse their interest in Peking Opera and desire to explore. The form of online broadcasting also brings an "external interaction" to 'Inheriting China', that is, through the barrage interaction and comments of online netizens, an online community atmosphere is created. For example, you can see the barrage and the message under the video of 'Inheriting China' on bilibili. Some of them make popular science on the participants' information, some of them complain about which actor's singing is lacking in maturity, some of them praise a teacher's voice talent, and some of them strongly demand that talented actors like Li Qin and Yuan Quan should attend the second season and so on. The audience who have watched the program together and have their own aspirations to confide will spontaneously form a kind of communication, and in the process of this discussion, they will interact with other people's memories of 'Inheriting China'. Therefore, this online interaction around the same theme can consolidate the audience's impression of the program and receive the knowledge that they didn't have in mind, thus expanding their memories of Peking Opera culture horizontal.

5. Conclusion

In today's context, the identity of a country or a nation is closely related to cultural confidence, and the cultural confidence of a nation needs to be rooted in traditional culture. Traditional culture needs to be "spread" and "inherited", which involves both forward and backward directions. As Jan Assmann said, memory not only reconstructs the past, but also organizes the present and future experiences. Therefore, it is

obviously necessary to use the theory of cultural memory to analyze cultural programs that have relatively social influence. We need to understand this operation idea of "connecting the past with the future". Taking Beijing Satellite TV's 'Inheriting China' program as a case of cultural strategy analysis, it mainly shows three dimensions of memory: "memory of objects" refers to the reconstruction of space, "imitation memory" focuses on people's behavior, and "transactive memory" is the invisible link between things. These three dimensions all point to cultural memory itself, and form a cohesive structure that crosses the social level and the time level by means of recall, recognition and continuation respectively.

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