

# Real Situation and Inner Image

## Analysis on the Urban Cultural Image of the Drama “I Am Waiting for You in Chengdu”, the First Drama of Dream Seekers’ Life in Chengdu\*

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**Abstract**—In July 2018, the first drama of dream seekers’ life in Chengdu “I am waiting for you in Chengdu” was performed in Wuhou Theater and Sanhe Classic Car Museum in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. The continuous hot scene completely exceeded the team’s expectations. Major domestic news media such as “Toutiao”, “People’s Daily”, and “West China City Daily” quickly made the response, and gave the detailed reports. The drama has provoked a thousand waves. It has caused widespread response from all walks of life. It is the successful capture and theater depiction of the historical changes in the 40 years of reform and opening up in Chengdu. This drama has successfully used the modern sketch style of Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival to describe various humanities in the city. The described “Life World” is lively. And this drama is completely performed on the stage that the people like to see and hear. Therefore, every individual with flesh and blood has been substituted into the space-time context of modern history. The living theater with great sense of substitution describes people’s life of fate intercommunication. The storytelling of the play also describes the living environment and cultural image. It can be said that the true feelings are connected, and the mind is linked to the real situation. The portrayal of such an open image has triggered wide-ranging repercussions from all walks of life.

**Keywords**—the first drama of dream seekers’ life in Chengdu; “I am waiting for you in Chengdu”; urban cultural image

### I. INTRODUCTION

In July 2018, "I am waiting for you in Chengdu", the first drama of dream seekers' life in Chengdu was co-authored by Pan Naiqi of Sichuan Opera Troupe and Wang Miao of

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Chengdu University. Also, this drama was co-directed by Lu Chunxiao and Li Yihang of Sichuan Normal University. The college students of Sichuan Normal University, Sichuan Conservatory of Music and other universities and colleges in Chengdu participated in the performance of this drama. "I am waiting for you in Chengdu", the first drama of dream seekers' life in Chengdu was performed in Wuhou Theater and Sanhe Classic Car Museum in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. And the continuous hot scene completely exceeded the team's expectations. This "internal program" originally used to celebrate the first anniversary of the establishment of the Chengdu Youth Troupe has attracted wide attention and heated discussion from all walks of life. "Toutiao", "People's Daily", "West China City Daily", "Sichuan Daily", Tencent and other major news media quickly responded, and did not hesitate to give detailed reports. The success of the performance and the enthusiastic social repercussions made the sluggish drama market really hot.

What caused the abnormal excitement of the social nerves? What made everyone's mood soaring? What made people rush to watch it? Absolutely, the success can't be separable from the scene depiction style of "Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival" and destiny of the contemporary dream seekers in Chengdu. In the theater, we can see the pictures of dream seekers' busy life and little-known sad stories in Chengdu, for example, the radio host, bank staff, buns shop vendors, urban management law enforcement officers, food service waiters, insurance salesmen, courier brothers, university teachers, students who are addicted to games, teahouse entertainers, card partner, material girl and the endless stream of tourists. The audience can see the vicissitudes of life. They choose to be in this leisurely, comfortable, rural and western city, and choose to drift in this city with the sense of not leaving. As a result, the real changes of dreams, love, career, family, housing, etc., their encounters and fate are presented to the audience. Everyone in the theater is exclaiming that it is "me".

## II. THE SENSE IMAGE OF COMMONALITY WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE PLAY

"I" used to be an insurance salesman, opened a shop, worked as a service waiter and courier just as the people in the drama. The drama reflected "my" experience. "I" was once a city management law enforcement officer or traffic auxiliary policeman. "I" didn't want to have conflicts with the vendors. "I" studied hard. "I" had postgraduate exams, and wanted to stay in Chengdu that "I" loved very much... The world is big, but "I" loves Chengdu. Every "I" wants to integrate into this "the city where the air is full of hot pot flavor". However, in the hard social work and development, "we" have encountered real dilemma such as high housing prices, fierce competition, frustrated ideals and love, and providing for the parents. Choosing to continue to wander in Chengdu to seek the dream, or to return to the hometown to have little pressure, has become the "Hamlet tangled" of each dream seeker in Chengdu ("to be, or not to be") that cannot be broken out.

Instead of a game stage that has nothing to do with the audience, the "common" theater, which is substituted into the complex of sentient beings, becomes a mirror space and a window for the experience of every "dream seekers in Chengdu". The boundary between the mirror theater and the aesthetic perspective disappears. The actors, spectators, and almost everyone see their own true and illusory life miniatures in this all-encompassing mirror world. The mirror theater not only reflects the life experience of independent individuals, but also reflects the public problems encountered by the "dream seekers in Chengdu". It should be related to Goffman's "Self-presentation of Daily Life" and also reflects the actual encounter of current urban people. At the same time, it has adopted Lewis Mumford's urban drama theory. Finally, this drama also brought out the artist's ultimate anthropological problems such as "Where am I? Who am I? Where am I going?". These problems are intriguing and thought-provoking. The "resonance from all walks of life" requires everyone to make a decisive response. We are not only watching the drama, but actually participating in it. The stage of the theater is small, but the world of life is great. The fate interaction of each other has urged the dream seekers in Chengdu to find their own role-playing, social position and the meaning of existence in the world.

In other words, the feelings of homeland and the doubts of belonging are performed in the plot development of the rootless "dream seekers in Chengdu". The feelings of homeland in the multi-dimensional perspectives such as the "decentralization" and "desubjectification" are not only mixed with Pascal's anxiety, but also closely related to Heidegger's painful thinking about the lack of human spiritual homeland. It not only reflects "our" Sisyphus-style daily work, but also outlines the intricate emotional changes. For example, we go ahead in torrents; we feel confused; we work hard. Therefore, there is no difficult vocabulary in the freakish plot narrative, there is no earth-shattering grand deed, and there is no absurd ridicule of the Western post-modern dramatists Beckett and Yunesco. On the contrary, all dialogue monologues and scene activities adopt the authentic style of Chengdu. This drama is the collection of life. It can

be said that this drama shows the modernization process of planning jointly to build the unique poetic homeland in the east by the ordinary people on the land of Sichuan province working day and night with mutual understanding and integration. In the face of the modern crisis of Sartre's "Being and nothingness", the active exploration and Chinese-style solution of the drama are full of challenges, and the narrowness of the "ego" is out of the way. It can be said that it is a pioneer in the era of the destiny community to broaden the mood.

## III. THE MODERN IMAGE OF CULTURAL LIFE IN NEW ORIENTAL CITIES HAS BEEN PRESENTED

It throws away a brick in the drama, and it wants to get a gem outside the play. In other words, it plants the seeds in the field, and it wants to harvest outside the show. This kind of micro-narrative technique, which not only narrows the distance between actors and audience, but also eliminates the boundary between stage art and real life, greatly expands the audience's aesthetic vision, and highly condenses the "urban" cultural impression of Chengdu. Kuanzhai Alley, Du Fu Thatched Cottage, Wuhou Temple, Jinli Ancient Street, Qingyang Temple, Panda Base, Jinsha Ruins, Sunbird, Dujiangyan Irrigation System, Mount Qingcheng, as well as Sichuan embroidery, Jiuyanqiao Bar, Yulin chuanchuan, moonlight over lotus pond, Huanhuaxi and other famous cultural attractions in Chengdu were all presented to the audience in the coherent narrative. This is the stage expression of the urban cultural drama, the creative output of the cultural impression of Chengdu. Accompanied by the singer Zhao Lei's "Chengdu", Li Yuchun and Zhang Liangying's background music, as well as Li Boqing's storytelling, Wei Minglun's drama, Zhou Chunya and He Duoling's paintings and other cultural celebrities' artistic backgrounds, Chengdu's leisurely and elegant images are presented to the world.

If it is said that Paris is fashionable and romantic, Tokyo is bustling and colorful, New York is full of vitality, Shanghai is exquisite and elegant, Chengdu will be the synonymous of leisure and comfort. To describe Chengdu in the words of director Lu Chunxiao, it is very appropriate. That is, "the mountain in Chengdu is silent, the water in Chengdu is meek, and the beauty of Chengdu is consistent with the calmness of seeing the clouds". This drama can use the creative form to accurately convey the unique leisure and comfort of Chengdu, which should be attributed to the actors' tender and honest performance. These actors are all college students who have just entered the colleges and universities in Chengdu. There is no stage performance experience and no big-name star guidance, however, they have a heart full of curiosity and daring to perform themselves. They are curious about the cultural landscape of Chengdu. The freshness firstly encountered was the source of inspiration that was not contaminated by any rational reflection or conceptual bias. They are born with the kind of sensitive and tender just as "small fish swimming in the rain, the swallow flying with the breeze". They can accurately capture and register the comfort and leisure of Chengdu. There is a feeling in the city, and I feel that I am in it. The city and I are one. Like bamboo

shoots with peeled leaves, and peeled eggs, it gives a fresh and natural intimacy and roundness. This is both a vivid portrayal of the spirit of urban drama and the emergence of the culture of Chengdu. In short, "I am waiting for you in Chengdu" is not only a contemporary pioneering drama, but also an expressive urban drama that has been extremely rare in recent years.

Secondly, the spiritual expression of Chengdu is also inseparable from the high degree of coincidence resonance among creative writing and personality of the director, the composition and melody style, and the stage screen (stage comprehensive design). If Chengdu in Li Bai's eyes refers to a landscape scene of "God creating beautiful Chengdu, every household is like a painting", Chengdu in Du Fu's eyes refers to the "daily music and the beauty smoke cloud", Chengdu in the eyes of Pan Naiqi and Wang Miao refers to the "hot pot that can't be lost, the string that can't be forgotten, the continually swaying heartstrings and the fascinating dream poetry". "Walking with me along the streets of Chengdu", you can understand the poetic feelings in the eyes of the director. This dreamy blur is in line with Pan Naiqi's misty and elegant temperament. In the dripping rendering of the elegant ink, Pan gradually entered the depths of the cultural image of Chengdu. In the sensation of indulging in the image of leisure and comfort, the author gradually forgot where he was. The author didn't know if "he" was in the city, or was the city in his heart? He didn't know if he dreamed of the city, or "the city" dreamed of me. Indulging in the image, people and nature are in harmony. There is close relationship between people and the nature. Chengdu, as a physical space, has transformed into a humane place where you can live, and a gentle harbor that can be docked for rest, which can entrust a lifetime as the "spiritual home".

As a result, all the objects in Chengdu have become poetic images by the main creative team, and there are always energy exchanges and links with us. "Jinli Ancient Street is you; Kuanzhai Alley is you; Taikoo Li is you; Hot pot is you; Chuanchuan is you; Sichuan opera face is you; Mount Qingcheng is you; Mountain Xiling is you; and Panda is you. God gave Chengdu the beautiful landscape. People will cry and laugh in this city. All the emotional changes are because of Chengdu. When people feel tired, they have rest in Chengdu. People pursue the dream at present and in the future. People grow with the city all the time. From Qingyang Temple to Huanhuaxi, there are twenty miles." (You are my Chengdu) All the beautiful images in Chengdu have become the author's loving objects. There does not have grotesque as well as that of Kafka's "Metamorphosis" in Chengdu, nor does it have the disgusting rejection in Baudelaire's "Flower of Evil". On the contrary, it is the one that combines things with people, the past and the present, and the heart and things. Because of the author's true writing, Chengdu has become a vivid cultural image, becoming a shining pearl in the history of culture and the patron saint of human homeland. You have completed Chengdu, and Chengdu has decorated other people's dreams.

Finally, the drama can outline the life of the city, and it is inseparable from the reform and opening-up policy of the Party Central Committee. It is inseparable from the

preconditions for the historical transformation and development of the country's modernization, urbanization and industrialization. Without the great decision-making of reform and opening up, it is difficult to imagine how the historical changes in urban expansion, industrialization, intelligent development, and industrial division of labor have become a reality. Why Chengdu can become the inexhaustible base of creative materials? Through the various professional identities on the stage, the differentiation and break-up of various fields, the historical picture of conflicts and interactions with each other, it can show the vicissitudes of the modern international city in the past 40 years of reform and opening up. Without reform and opening up and urban modernization, it is hard to imagine the prosperous and bustling prosperity of Chengdu, such as Kuanzhai Alley, Jinli, Chunxi Road and Taikooli. Our urban cultural memory may still stay in the old picture of the ancient Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival. If there is no rich and fertile cultural soil rooted in the masses of the people, the narrowness of the "ego" is not taken out, it is hard to imagine how this all-encompassing landscape can be presented.

Therefore, in the context of reform and opening up and the urbanization, the drama will allow us to see that "one specific person with flesh and blood has the emotion. He will love and hate others. He has the dream. Also, there are conflicts and struggles in his heart." The audience can understand "the voice, the joys and sorrows of the people, the great practice of the people and their colorful life." At the same time, the author saw the profound understanding of main creator on the life of dream seekers in Chengdu during the reform period. The reason why the things seen are moving and cause sensational effects is that they are rooted in the rich soil of people's life. They "go into the depths of life, understand the essence of life among the people, and thoroughly understand the life." After chewing through the life and completely digesting it, it becomes a profound plot and moving image, and the created works are so excited". (Xi Jinping's Speech at Beijing Symposium on Literature and Art, 2014)

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In fact, the "Life World" has been proposed as early as Husserl's diagnosis of the "Crisis of European Science" and is discussed in detail as an important way to overcome the crisis of modernity. Subsequently, the major proposition of "Life World" gradually spread from the concept of philosophical phenomenology to various fields of humanities such as politics, economy, society, education, ecology, etc. It almost became the inspiration source and ultimate attribution of all cultural knowledge. It can be said that the "Life World" is innately integrated with its dual characteristics: the objective reality, as an empirical reality, cannot be stripped from human society; the subjective world, as a transcendental phenomenon, exists independently as a prerequisite for its possibility. The internal evolution of the "Life World" has its own logic. It absorbs all the grievances, sweet and bitter, good and evil, ugliness, moral conscience, and even life and death. Regardless of class, race, gender, and skin color, we are all living in an all-encompassing "life

world". The "life world" is inherently integrated and inclusive. All members in it can engage in ideological exchanges and dialogues on public topics.

It can be seen that the original drama "I am waiting for you in Chengdu" not only looks at the infinitely broad "life world" that Hussein and Xi Jinping are talking about, but also draws inspiration from it. The cross-cutting display of the "life world" changes in the western cities of China satisfies the guiding ideology of "the service of literature and art for the people" proposed by Mao Zedong's "Speech at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art". It is also the 40th anniversary gift of reform and opening up and the development of Chengdu.

In short, the reason why the first drama of dream seekers' life in Chengdu can provoke a thousand waves, which has aroused widespread concern from all walks of life, that is, the main creation team successfully captures the historical changes of Chengdu during the period of reform and opening up. This drama has successfully used the modern sketch style of Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival to describe various humanities in the city. The described "Life World" is lively. And this drama is completely performed on the stage that the people like to see and hear. Therefore, every individual with flesh and blood has been substituted into the space-time context of modern history. The living theater with great sense of substitution describes people's life of fate intercommunication. The storytelling of the play also describes the living environment and cultural image. It can be said that the true feelings are connected, and the mind is linked to the real situation. The vivid portrayal has triggered widespread resonance in all walks of life.

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