

From Fiction to Teleplay — Study on Lu Yao's Ordinary World

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Abstract—The TV play “Ordinary World” is basically faithful to the original novel. It embodies the integration of multi-cultures in three aspects: space-time choice, character creation and marriage mode. It has not only the manifestation of the mainstream culture, but also the latent of folk culture, and the expansion of popular factors.

Keywords—pluralism; mainstream culture; folk culture; popular factors

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Lu Yao's novel *The Ordinary World*, the TV play *The Ordinary World*, which was changed, was just broadcasted on TV in April 2015. The audience's "Shanxi Pu" is not like many other voices over and so on. But the strange phenomenon is that this TV drama has not been affected by many audiences. According to statistics, the TV series has been well received, and the Internet click-through rate has exceeded 2 billion by April. This phenomenon is thought-provoking.

From the overall adaptation effect, the TV play basically restores the style and temperament of the novel. This three-volume masterpiece brought about a reading boom from the 1980s to the 1990s, when it incurred various criticisms; now it has entered the twenty-first century, and the TV series adapted from the novel still have a tremendous repercussion among today's urban youth, won quite good ratings, and even made a part of lifelong fans pick up the novel again. Therefore, some people say that "The Ordinary World" has become a cultural phenomenon.

With the end of the first broadcast of TV series, discussions from experts and audiences have been heated. Various formal and informal seminars have been held one after another. Experts and scholars from film and television circles and literary circles have made their own voices to discuss this topic warmly. The author believes that this phenomenon is an excellent explanation of today's cultural environment. As a kind of media art, because of its narrative characteristics, every TV play will reflect the cultural characteristics of the times in which it lives.

There are several complex levels or forms of Chinese culture today, which can be divided into four categories from different angles: mainstream culture, elite culture and folk culture. Mainstream culture, also known as dominant culture,

is a culture that represents the national authority ideology under the control of the state power organs and occupies the dominant position of cultural propaganda. Elite culture, also known as elegant culture, is the Enlightenment Culture of intellectuals. Because of the traditional dependence of Chinese intellectuals, it has a congenital relationship with the mainstream culture, so it has been lack of independence; folk culture is a process of self-entertainment popular culture spontaneously and mainly handed down orally by ordinary people, sometimes referring to the life of people in the lower class society, especially in rural patriarchal society. Of course, this is only a rational distinction. The real situation is much more complicated than the theory. In reality, these three cultural forms are often intermingled and utilized.

II. HIGHLIGHTING OF THE MAINSTREAM CULTURE

It is said that "Ordinary World" was approved by Secretary Xi Jinping at the beginning of broadcasting. As we all know, Secretary Xi's ancestral home in Shaanxi Province, this TV play dedicated to his father and fellow villagers in Yulin, Shaanxi Province, may have triggered his homesickness complex, but it cannot be denied that the ideas advocated by this TV play conform to the requirements of our current mainstream ideology, which should be the deeper reason. The proper meaning of the dominant culture of the mainstream culture is that it takes group integration, order stability and ethical harmony as the core of communication, represents the common interests of the government and all social groups, and aims to produce edification in the widest possible social groups.

The TV play "Ordinary World" provides at least three levels of educational implications for the audience: Firstly, personal fate and national fate are closely linked. This TV play mainly describes the vicissitudes of China's history from 1975 to 1985. At that time, our country was experiencing the pains of reform. At first, the common people experienced widespread poverty. With the holding of the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee, China implemented the policy of reform and opening up, implemented the responsibility system of production, carried out the land reform and solved the problem of food and clothing. They embarked on the road of prosperity. Individuals are trapped in the tide of the reform of the times. Everyone's life is closely related to the fate of the country.

Without reform and opening-up, Sun Shao'an would not be able to get rich. Similarly, Sun Shaoping would not be able to go out of his home and become the first generation of migrant workers, and eventually settle down in the city, and so on.

Secondly, *The Ordinary World* reiterates the simplest principles of life. For example, labor is the most beautiful. For example, being an official serves the people. For example, people live by eating rice and so on. Sun Shaoping achieves self-worth and personal dignity through labor, which can alarm young people today. Material is important, but it is not the only one. Life can have countless possibilities. Just like the women in the play, Tian Runye and He Xiulian, when they practice suffering for their responsibility, suffering has a certain form, even a sense of tragedy. This has become a kind of spiritual inspiration that this TV play can bring us. So after the TV play was broadcast, some people on the network called it an "inspirational" play. In addition, Tian Fujun, as a leader, has a very good image, which explains the connotation of serving the people by Party members and cadres. Being an official is by no means to satisfy personal desires. His basic point is to keep the interests of the common people in mind at all times. In order to highlight Tian Fujun's sense of justice, the TV play adds a plot not found in the novel. Xu Aiyun, his wife, accepts bribes without knowing it, which leads to the collapse of the bridge just built by the tofu dregs project. When Tian Fujun learns the truth, he personally sends his wife to the public security organ to surrender, reflecting his selfless and beautiful character, which also gives us the anti-corruption in society at present. It provides a positive example. Moreover, Sun Shaoping, as the first protagonist in the original works, has a tilted position in the TV series due to the dramatic increase in Sun Shaoping's drama, but his spiritual pursuit is still moving and full of strength. He still pursues the quality of spiritual life under the heavy workload of working in xanthan and digging coal underground. This contrasts sharply with the current situation of young people's material desire and spiritual malaise.

Thirdly, love is not the only thing in life. Marriage has many possibilities. Many people say they like the expression of feelings in this TV play very much. It is completely different from idol plays, especially Korean dramas. The expression of love in idol plays is the only meaning of life. If you lose love, you will be desperate. Life will never be loved again. But *Ordinary World* is not like that. For example, Sun Shao'an and Tian Runye married Xiulian after their breakup. They felt deeper and more down-to-earth love in the bitterness of their lives. It tells us that serious life can contain everything and provide unlimited possibilities for people. Similarly, after the failure of his first love, Tian Runye experienced a long period of painful rumination, but after Li Qian's car accident, he chose to return to him, took the initiative to bear the suffering, and began a down-to-earth marriage life. Finally, Nirvana rebirth, harvest happiness, and realize the deeper meaning of life. Sun Shaoping did the same. After his beloved lover Tian Xiaoxia died in the flood relief, he chose to go back to the coal mine and to Qi Yingqi to continue his ordinary life. Of course, here is doped with

the survival of the concept of folk, people's survival is the first to "live", to maintain the body of life existence, this is the bottom of society for human existence limits set.

Of course, these ideas are intermingled with the intellectuals' elite consciousness. The propaganda of these positive energies is expressed through the vivid characters in TV plays and the twists and turns of wonderful stories, which does not give people a sense of hard education. Lu Yao's concern was the spiritual evolution of individuals active in the tide of reform, while director Mao Weiping still focused on the spiritual world of screen characters along Lu Yao's road, so that the ideals, beliefs and personality contained in "Ordinary World" were transmitted. Nowadays, with the further development of the commercial society, the pursuit of money has become the main criterion to measure a person's success. However, this TV series has stimulated the transcendental material ideal existing in everyone's heart and provided a channel to people's spiritual life. In this sense, it can be said that it is a work to promote the main theme of society, but there are many intellectuals' elite consciousness about ideals, beliefs and personality beauty. From this point of view, this is a successful adaptation.

III. HIDING OF FOLK CULTURE

Folk culture is one of the most commonly used concepts derived from folk culture. Western anthropologists divide culture into big tradition and small tradition, which are the top-level intellectuals' elite culture on the economic basis. Its background is the control of state power in the ideological field, so it usually presents itself by power and disseminates it through education and publishing institutions. Small tradition refers to popular folk culture tradition, especially in rural areas, with the background of National activities. The power of the family cannot be controlled in an all-round way or in the marginal areas where the control power is relatively weak. It pays more attention to the life of the lower class, especially in the rural patriarchal system. The tradition of folk culture has both ethical and moral beliefs and aesthetic perspectives from the people. Although it cannot be separated from the upper culture of the ruling class, it has a strong color of freedom and a strong state of freedom. Generally speaking, the influence of folk culture tradition often internalizes in the collective unconsciousness, and imperceptibly projects into the creative and aesthetic activities of individual spiritual products. As a normal form of popular culture, TV plays must satisfy the audiences' multi-level aesthetic needs if they want to be welcomed by the broad audience. In this TV play, the invisible structure of folk culture inadvertently meets this condition, so that the audience at all levels can get a kind of aesthetic satisfaction.

Here, the author analyses the hidden structure of folk culture in *The Ordinary World* from fiction to TV play from two aspects of time, space and theme.

A. *Temporal and Spatial Background*

As a kind of bottom culture, folk culture has marginality and concealment. It usually hides in the bottom of society in an invisible attitude. In the period of social transformation, it

will show the tenacity of vitality and the richness of culture in a dominant attitude. The Ordinary World has chosen the most representative time and space background.

Firstly, the narrative time of the work is from the day before the stunning in 1975 to the noon of the day before the Qingming Festival in 1985, totaling ten years. This decade is a period of transformation of Chinese society, or a period of prominence of folk culture as a small tradition. In 1975, the Cultural Revolution was coming to an end, China's political and economic system was facing a severe test, and all work began anew. With the end of the Cultural Revolution, China has entered a new stage. The integrated ideological and cultural policies are loose, and the control of the mainstream cultural ideology is relatively weakened. Although this unification of ideology and culture will not change as quickly as the Gang of Four, it is no longer a dominant cultural policy after all. Therefore, the weakening of the mainstream ideology provides convenience for the rise of folk culture. During this period, the old system has been destroyed and the new system has not yet been established, so the folk culture hidden underground is emerging, showing strong vitality and rich connotation.

Secondly, the writer Lu Yao is a writer of Shaanxi origin. He bases himself on the earth under his feet, insists on realistic writing and writes his most familiar life. The characters in the play mainly live in Xishuangshui Village, Xanthan Plain, Shaanxi Province. Shaanxi, an ancient land, belongs to the Qin culture in terms of its historical and cultural origins. Historically, as the birthplace of the Qin Dynasty, the feudal culture of two thousand years in China, Shaanxi's ideological control has always been stricter. After thousands of years of feudal slavery, the Shaanxi people living in it have formed the characteristics of sticking to the rules and following the old ways. This characteristic has brought tremendous resistance to the upcoming reform, and can better show the shock and evolution of human spirit through change. This also provides fertile soil for the good-looking of "opera".

IV. THEME DISPLAY

Here, the author discusses the borrowing and deepening of folk culture theme in *The Ordinary World* from two aspects: the hero's portrayal and the mode of marriage and love.

Firstly, it is the portrayal of the protagonist. The shaping of the three protagonists in Ping draws lessons from the shaping model of folk heroes. In folk culture, heroes usually have two characteristics, legendary and utilitarian. When a hero was young, he went through a legendary adventure, which was a growing process; after his adventure, he set up a family business, which was a mature process. Generally speaking, the first stage relies on courage and the second stage relies on wisdom. The formation of such a heroic model is actually influenced by the mainstream culture and follows the model of Mingjun in the mainstream culture. A wise emperor rides a horse to fight the world, sits on the world with wisdom, and the world, that is, the country, is a great business owned by the emperor. The image of Mingjun

is deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, which influences the definition of heroic image in folk culture. Of course, in this work of describing modern life, the legendary nature is no longer the kind of adventure in classical legendary stories, but it is interlinked in terms of the nature of growth. This is illustrated by the fact that Sun Shao'an became the production captain at the age of eighteen. A hero should be valiant and visionary. Sun Shaoan has this quality. The increase of his dramas in TV dramas is considered from this angle. For example, giving the members more division of pig feed fields, requiring contractors to go to households, mediating the nearby villages to discharge water, and blasting dammed mountains all reflect these two characteristics of Sun Shaoan. Sun Shaoan of Shuangquan was derided by netizens as "immortal Sun Shaoan". After the reform and opening up, Sun Shaoan quickly seized the opportunity of the times to set up brick kilns, brick factories and embarked on the road to prosperity.

Sun Shaoping's heroic achievement path is slightly different from his brother's. The author describes him going out of the countryside, into the city, and pursuing a new life, while paying more attention to depicting his spiritual pursuit. Sun Shao'an made his fortune in the countryside. Sun Shaoping went out to seek wealth, increased his experience. The two brothers, one materially rich and the other spiritually rich, can also be said to be complementary and complete to each other's heroic image. In addition, as far as Tian Fujun, the third leading official, is concerned, he also has a good family business, namely promotion. In folk culture, promotion and prosperity are symbols of heroic success. In this way, the "Ordinary World" completed the portrayal of heroes with two and three characters of two families, avoiding duplication, taking into account the richness of life, and taking care of the aesthetic needs of different audiences at different levels.

Secondly, let's look at the pattern of love and marriage. Because love and marriage embody the richest and most complex feelings of human beings, they can best express a deep cultural connotation. "Ordinary World" through the emotional entanglement of modern young people, demonstrates the unique marriage mode of folk culture. Generally speaking, there are two main types: one is the model of gifted scholars and beautiful women; the other is the model of marrying widows. In *The Ordinary World*, there are several couples of love relationships that are both gifted and beautiful, such as Sun Shao'an and Tian Runye, Sun Shao'an and He Xiulian, Sun Shaoping and Hao Hongmei, Sun Shaoping and Tian Xiaoxia. As one of the invisible structures of folk love writing, the mode of "gifted scholar and beautiful woman" narrates love at first sight between poor scholar and eunuchs, then decides on love stories for life, and finally gets married. Especially in opera stories, it has long been an aesthetic habit of Chinese people. Lu Yao borrowed this model to modify the identity of "gifted man" and "beautiful woman" and to change the outcome of Dahe reunion. The Sun brothers, born in the peasant family, are handsome, courageous and knowledgeable, and belong to the young people in modern society. Tian Runye is beautiful, gentle, and has the identity of a city person, but she has no

hesitation in falling in love with Sun Shao'an, who grew up together when she was a child; Tian Xiaoxia, as a "second generation of officials", is also a beautiful girl, and has received university education, but she falls in love with Sun Shaoping, a rural "talent". Sun Shaoping and Tian Xiaoxia ended with the sacrifice of "beautiful woman". The two pairs of "gifted scholars and beautiful women" failed to achieve a reunion outcome. This is Lu Yao's change of this old model out of realistic considerations, but let the gifted men in his mind finally choose the right marriage. Sun Shao'an chose to be with He Xiulian, which is another sense (belonging to the same class: rural) talented people and beautiful women who fall in love at first sight and eventually get married. This "beautiful woman" implies the requirement for women since the founding of the People's Republic: good labor. Shaoping finally chose to be with Qi Yingqi, which is also Lu Yao's borrowing of another folk marriage mode. That is to say, the prejudice against widows is eliminated and the mode of marrying widows is eliminated.

The model of widow-fighting has a long history, and there are many records in Chinese and foreign history. For example, in the Middle Spring and Autumn Period of "Zuo Zhuan", Qi State doctor Cui Wei married Tang Jiang, Tanggong's widow, and in the Bible, Ruth, a virtuous woman, was contested by two men. Of course, a man chooses a widow as his wife under the condition of choice. This is a prerequisite. The widow must be beautiful, competent and virtuous. It is better to have a son to prove her fertility. In *The Ordinary World*, two young people eventually choose widows as their marriage partners, which meet these conditions. One is Tian Runsheng's choice of Hao Hongmei, a widow, which implies that Sun Shaoping, after rejecting the courtship of Jinxiu, a friend of his sister's College student, finally chose to be with Qi Yingqi on the same terms. It embodies rich folk concepts. Firstly, it breaks down the concept of chastity advocated by Confucian culture. In the patriarchal rural society where living conditions are difficult, survival is the first important thing. People have no prejudice against widows and the scholar-bureaucrat class. This shows the vitality of folk culture and criticizes the decadent concept of feudal tradition. On the other hand, it also highlights the open mentality of modern society, implies the "Siblings love" mode in current popular culture, and provides people with another kind of imagination of "little fresh meat" in popular culture.

V. EXPANSION OF POPULAR CULTURE

In addition, this TV play depicts the life scenes of the rural caves, coal mines, schools, supply and marketing cooperatives in northern Shaanxi in the 1970s. These scenes are inherent in the original works. When the images are displayed on the screen, it arouses a large part of the nostalgia of people wandering in the city, and at the same time meets a kind of novelty-seeking psychology of modern young people to that era. Of course, the success of TV plays lies in the reference of popular culture. For example, it is known as "the most beautiful rural drama in history". Rural drama borrows the shell of idol drama, and the joining of young and beautiful idol actors is a bright spot. In the

original works, the Sun brothers showed inferiority and cowardice when facing the love of urban women who were born higher than themselves, but in the TV series they changed to active and bold pursuit, showing the characteristics of men's aggression, which is in line with modern women's aesthetic expectations of men. In addition, there are some fashionable lifestyles depicted in the TV series, such as chasing cars in love between Shao'an and Runye, bridges to eat letters, two-year appointments between Shao'an and Xiaoxia, University dances, and so on. It is precisely because of the expansion of these popular cultural factors that the TV series attracts audiences of all ages.

VI. CONCLUSION

Generally speaking, the adaptation of "Ordinary World" from fiction to television has achieved the desired goal, "or may lead the trend of remaking the literary classics of the 1980s." [2]

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