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Multiple Construction of Nanjing's Aesthetic Image in Geo-cultural Context

-- Nanjing elements in film and television drama works as an example

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Abstract: As a renowned historical and cultural city, Nanjing boasts a rich cultural heritage and unique humanistic landscapes. In recent years, numerous film and television dramas have been filmed in Nanjing. These works, with their diverse aesthetic styles and visual symbols, have fully displayed Nanjing's geo-cultural traits and distinctive elements, crafting a spatial aesthetic imbued with Nanjing's local character. These dramas vary in their aesthetic portrayal of Nanjing's humanistic landscapes and geography, collectively creating a colorful and multifaceted visual space that contributes to the construction of Nanjing's aesthetic image.

Keywords: Geo-culture; Nanjing elements; Visual space; Aesthetic image

As the former capital of six dynasties, Nanjing excels in the fields of economy, culture, and art. In recent years, it has even made frequent appearances in a number of films and television dramas, which has made it an essential visual element to draw viewers. Nanjing has a rich natural and humanistic landscape and landmark heritage, as well as a long historical legacy.

The research field of film and television theory has also paid much attention to the study of film spatial turn and geo-culture in recent years, and Prof. Jia Leilei explicitly pointed out that "the geo-cultural characteristics of film refer to the iconic and constant artistic expressions based on non-fictional geographic factors and cultural traditions that are repeatedly presented in the film, which include constantly repeating narrative themes, similar characters and ever-present natural landscapes. characters and ever-present natural landscapes."^[1] Under the theoretical context of geo-cultural studies, a series of films with local characteristics such as "Haiku Movie", "Western Movie", "Tibetan Movie", "Jiangnan Movie", etc. have appeared. Under the theoretical context of geo-cultural research, a series of research directions with local characteristics have appeared, such as "Shanghai Film", "Western Film", "Tibetan Film", "Jiangnan Film", etc. Among them, "Jiangnan Film", in terms of geographic significance and cultural significance, is precisely the visual communication of the dynamic and poetic culture of Jiangnan through the medium of film, and the culture of the Jinling of Nanjing is also embedded in it.

In the vivid video works, Nanjing elements of all shapes and sizes are expressed to the fullest extent, embodying extremely rich aesthetic connotations. These video works provide a multi-layered, multi-dimensional and multi-perspective visual presentation of Nanjing's humanistic landscape and geography, highlighting the geo-cultural characteristics of Nanjing, and constructing a multi-layered aesthetic image of Nanjing in different dimensions, including the beauty of the ancient charm, the beauty of the marketplace, the beauty of the city, the beauty of the humanities, and so on. The micro-study of the construction of aesthetic image from film and television works, focusing on the local Nanjing as the position, has a positive effect on how to better promote the Yangtze River culture and study the aesthetics of the Yangtze River in the practice of film and television drama creation.

1. The Historical Beauty of the Old City

With more than 2,000 years of historical and cultural legacy, Nanjing has amassed rich and colorful artistic artifacts, as well as ancient architectural relics, that have withstood the test of time and the elements. Standing on this land, bearing the marks of successive dynasties, adhering to the starry mark, and deservingly emerging as the most perceptive representation of classical beauty in the context of Nanjing's aesthetics.

The famous TV series "The Legend of the New White Lady" was once a household name, and most of the scenes in the drama, which are set on the shores of West Lake in Hangzhou, are actually inspired by Nanjing. The mansion where Xu Xian and the White Maiden meet is known as "the first garden in Jinling," the palace in the play is the Chaotian Palace, the Leifeng Pagoda corresponds to the Medicine Buddha Pagoda of the Jiming Temple, and the West Lake is actually representative of Xuanwu Lake. Of course, the audience will not be overly critical

about the accuracy of the scenes when watching the drama, but the meticulous reproduction of the scenes and atmosphere of Nanjing, a city with a thousand-year history, cannot be denied.

In addition to costume dramas, Nanjing's ancient architectural relics have also appeared in numerous film and television dramas set in the modern era. Among them, the most photographed are the Ming City Wall and the train station. The Ming City Wall, a historical marvel after the Great Wall of China, is known as "the world's largest ancient city wall," and its historical and ornamental value is undoubted. The Ming City Wall stretches for several kilometers within the city of Nanjing, majestic, along the mottled masonry one picks up the steps. Standing on the wall, which has a history of more than 600 years, one pauses and stares at each brick, nostalgic for the former jingoes and iron horses, and the feeling of the vicissitudes of the world comes to life. It is because of the unique historical and aesthetic value of the Ming City Wall that the literary niche style of director Lou Ye favors this place. In the "Spring Breeze Drunken Night" and "Pushing Daisies" two literary films, important plots and clips were shot here.

Nanjing's Xiaguan Railway Station, built in 1905, played an important role as a major gateway for national transportation during the Republican era and was later remodeled several times, officially becoming a railroad museum in 2018. There is also the Nanjing Pukou Railway Station, constructed in 1908, where Zhu Ziqing bid farewell to his father and wrote the popular "Back Shadow," and whose most unique design feature is the arched rain corridor connecting the ferry terminal. The old train station and its mottled platforms, with the scenes and images alone, are full of a strong sense of age and sadness. Therefore, these two train stations have naturally become must-see places for filming break-ups, farewells, and other important scenes in many movies and TV dramas. Among them are the classic romance dramas "Love is Deep and Rainy," "To Our Lost Youth," "July and Anson," "Qiao's Children," and other popular movies and TV dramas, in which the protagonists of the stories have staged their partings and changed the trajectory of their lives here repeatedly. In addition, famous historical sites such as the Confucius Temple, Yuejiang Tower, Ming Tomb, the Porcelain Tower of Nanjing, and the heritage-listed Dahua Grand Theater, as well as natural landscapes such as Xuanwu Lake, Huanglongxian, and Luhe Forest Park, have all been featured in a number of movies and TV dramas, such as "Hello, Flame Blue," "Battle Wolf," and "Zeng Juvenile."

Ancient buildings and gardens itself is condensed with the classical aesthetics of the "thing and I forget, the unity of man and nature," the beauty of the rhyme, the smoky rainy Jiangnan, the Qinhuai River, both poetic and picturesque beauty and the mighty and magnificent beauty, both the ink and the dynamic beauty of Jiangnan, but also the unique pattern of the mountains and rivers, the ancient city of Nanjing is just a heavy history of the canon, said the endless vicissitudes of change. The ancient city of Nanjing is a heavy historical text, with endless vicissitudes and changes. Together with the unfolding of multiple story contexts in film and television works of different eras, it not only helps to accentuate the atmosphere of the storyline and bring the audience a pleasing visual experience, but also enables them to truly feel the collision and fusion of history and modernity in the development of Nanjing, which naturally becomes the preferred choice of visual images for expression, and the ancient beauty of Nanjing's bells and whistles is also embodied in a colorful manner.

2. The beauty of the bustling people's lives

Beyond the innumerable historical artifacts that Nanjing, as a cultural city, has to offer, the most can depict the lives of people than the old city's old streets and old alleys, brick huts and vendor stores, unusual alleys permeated with simplicity, quiet in the middle of the bustle of the city, a kind of "hidden in the city" of the openness of the face came to the fore.

The hit 2021 drama "Children of the Qiao Family" tells the tale of several children from the Qiao household, led by their eldest son, enduring three decades of storms and supporting each other. Set in Nanjing, the drama offers a comprehensive and authentic portrayal of local life in the city. The Qiao family resides in the Xuanwu District, where Sage Lane evokes memories of old Nanjing. The family wanders through the Gulou District, Yihe Road, with French sycamores lining both sides, framing the Republican-era architecture. "The tree is a sycamore tree, the city is Nanjing City," as the unique urban atmosphere creates a play of dappled light and shadow that linger. The environment and lines are filled with era-specific designs, resonating deeply with the audience.

Furthermore, Dragon's Neck Road, where Erhao chased the tram in "Love is Deep and Rainy," and Wutong Road, where Yi Ping poured her heart out after Shuhuan's departure, are both Nanjing streets exuding a strong Republican atmosphere. In "Once Upon a Time," the scene where Qin Chuan and Da Lung set up stalls to sell pancakes was filmed in the Orchid Garden neighborhood on Beijing East Road. The storyline of the popular realist film "I Am Not the God of Medicine" was mostly shot in Nanjing, with only a few scenes filmed in India. The hero, Cheng Yong, operates his business in the city, with scenes filmed in Nanjing. Cheng Yong's Indian miracle oil store, an unusual shop that dots the streets of the Nengrenli residential area in Yuhua District, as well as the baozi store and Fuzimiao noodle shop where leukemia patients gather to discuss medication channels in subsequent episodes, are actual locations in Sifang Lane and Liuha Dafang in Qinhuai District.

"The people of the world are the most appealing to the hearts of mortals". The best way to feel a city is to experience the daily life of the

common people by walking through the streets and alleys, which is a true portrayal of the people's livelihood. Daily life may be monotonous and boring, but shuttle in the old town criss-crossed streets and alleys, feel the rhythm of life of ordinary citizens day after day, year after year, both chicken and dog jumping, parents and short daily life, but also leisure and leisurely, contented and happy. People's senses of sight, smell, and taste are all wrapped up in local snacks like large bowls of skin-and-belly noodles, duck blood vermicelli soup, and saltwater duck in small eateries; elegant geographical features like stone bridges, stone steps, and mansions with meandering paths are everywhere, giving the impression that one is in a different world. The visual presentation of Nanjing's vernacular and everyday culture, along with the dialect and slang of the locals, allows viewers to experience the authentic tastes of the people and recognize the beauty of harmony, simplicity, and urbanism in everyday life. "The genes of Jiangnan's literature and culture are embodied in the streets and alleys of Jiangnan, which embody the marketplace smoky atmosphere of Jiangnan with its slang daily life, and also show the elegant and delicate side of Jiangnan culture with the aesthetic ideals of literati."^[2] In the current situation of continuous upgrading and accelerating urban construction planning, the former marketplace may gradually "change its old look into a new one" with the passage of time, so the excavation of the beauty of the marketplace and its communication through images are particularly precious and necessary, and it is also the effective inheritance and reasonable protection of the marketplace culture of Nanjing and the aesthetic image of the Jiangnan ancient city.

3. The Modern Beauty of the City

After the baptism of "the wind and rain on Zhongshan Mountain and the crossing of the Yangtze River by millions of heroes", Nanjing has finally said goodbye to the old times and opened a new chapter. Today, Nanjing, as the economic, cultural and transportation center of the Yangtze River Delta and the capital of Jiangsu Province, has undergone radical changes in the wave of deepening economic reforms, and has become a modern city worthy of the name.

As early as 2005, based on a few meters of the comic adaptation of the modern urban romance drama "Subway" in Nanjing as the main shooting location, when the Nanjing Metro Line 1 has just been put into use, the core site of Xinjiekou and Xinbai Plaza became the main scene of the story of the main hero and heroine of the drama; Lou Ye's "Spring Breeze Drunken Night" also appeared in the fashion Ledi shopping plaza and the Nanjing Yangtze River Bridge; I am not the God of Drugs, the actual scene of leukemia patients and their families scrambling to buy high-priced drugs taken from the Nanjing New City Science Park; "To Youth" in the important twists and turns in the relationship of the male and female leads are occurring in Nanjing Underwater World; young viewers love "You are my city pool I am not the God of Medicine" in the leukemia patients and their families scrambling to buy high-priced drugs from the Nanjing New City Science and Technology Park; "To Youth" in the hero and heroine in the relationship of the important turn of events in the underwater world in Nanjing; young viewers love the "you are my city barracks" "Hello Flame Blue" and other modern urban emotional dramas have repeatedly appeared in the 1912 neighborhoods, the Poly Theatre in Nanjing, the Nanjing Baijiahu and the Nanjing South Railway Station, the Sifang Museum of Contemporary Art, and other new landmarks. . Fire out of the circle of anti-corruption drama "In the Name of the People" in the main scenes are in Nanjing, aside from the plot itself, the drama deserves to be the city of Nanjing's propaganda film, the Golden Eye of the Youth Olympic Park, the Golden Ao Building of the Hexi New City, Lukou International Airport, the central shopping malls, etc., familiar with the audience in Nanjing along with the plot also moved to change the scene, inspired a strong sense of immersion. In the TV series "Breakout" and "Zeng Junior", a number of highly recognizable modern buildings, such as Zifeng Mansion, Xinjiekou, and Jiangbei New District Research and Innovation Park, made frequent appearances. Nanjing gives unexpected surprises with its urban temperament that is both ancient and fashionable.

The newly released "2023 Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the Innovation Capability of National Innovative Cities"^[3] shows that among the 101 innovative cities, Nanjing is ranked fourth, following Shenzhen, and is at the forefront of the country. Nanjing put forward a series of measures to "deepen the construction of innovative cities" in 2019, and then introduced the new Nanjing construction plan of "strong, rich, beautiful and high", and in 2022, it even mentioned the "core function of the city" for the first time. In 2022, the concept of "core functions of the city" was mentioned for the first time, and the long-term goal of building Nanjing into "the most influential innovation city in the world" was established. In recent years, Nanjing's innovative achievements in industrial innovation, talent introduction, science, education and culture, transportation planning, etc. have been obvious to all. With the completion of more high-tech industrial parks, science parks, new core business districts, new urban areas and bus lines, Nanjing, an ancient city located at the gateway to the Yangtze River Delta, owns more landmarks of the times, and they have become the new name cards of the city of Nanjing to create a new look and new image of the city. They have become the new name card of Nanjing, creating a new look and image of the city, making it a modern city with the beauty of fashion while enjoying the ancient style and charm, and giving it a unique charm of blending the ancient and the modern.

4. The beauty of the city's culture

Nanjing has been full of talents since ancient times, the ancient Jiangnan Tribute Academy is known as "the world's cultural center", and

now it is the "city of colleges and universities" with more than 50 high-quality colleges and universities, and "the capital of world literature", second only to Beijing and Shanghai in terms of culture, science and education, with unique location and advantages. In terms of domestic culture, science and education, it is second only to Beijing and Shanghai, and has the unique advantages of location, people and people, among which there are also centuries-old schools such as Nanjing University, Southeast University, Nanjing Normal University, Hehai University and so on, with a large number of masters and a large number of talents, and the resources for higher education are extremely rich. The quantity and quality of a city's institutions of higher learning inevitably determines its cultural and academic atmosphere and the overall quality of city residents. Under the cultivation of a strong humanistic atmosphere, Nanjing is dotted with more than 2,000 brick-and-mortar bookstores and a number of theaters and art museums, and annually organizes tens of thousands of reading exhibitions, performances, and other cultural exchanges, and the contents of the hundreds of flowers and thousands of flowers nourish the people's spiritual world, which also creates a special elegant atmosphere of the Qingyun City of Nanjing. The city of Nanjing has a special atmosphere of elegance.

The north building of Nanjing University covered with creepers, the old library of Southeast University, the central avenue of the old campus of Southeast University and the Yongquan Pond in "To Youth", the "net red" rotating staircase of the main campus of Hehai University, the QiXia slope of Nanjing Normal University, the Colosseum and the teaching building of Nanjing Media College in "The Ferryman". The children of the Qiao family" in the Qiao Yicheng read the university set from the Nanjing Normal University Suiyuan campus, "in the name of the people" in the various organs and departments of the filming location are from the major universities, such as the drama of the Handong Provincial People's Procuratorate office building is the four pailou campus of Southeast University auditorium. In addition, there are TV dramas such as "Junior Class", "Breakout" and other TV dramas in Nanjing Engineering Institute, Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Nanjing Institute of Physical Education, Nanjing Forestry University and other colleges and universities, such as sports stadiums, basketball halls, swimming pools, lecture halls and other places have been set up for filming, campus scenery in the film and television works in the high exposure rate fully proves that Nanjing colleges and universities in the country's influence should not be underestimated.

Every institution has a distinct historical background, development trajectory, and overall campus aesthetic as well as architectural characteristics. They have cultivated a vibrant campus culture and university spirit that endures forever and gives the impression of "entering the room of orchids for a long time and its own fragrance" by drawing on the historical and cultural legacy of Nanjing universities and colleges. Campus environment not only reflects the school's humanistic style, but also nurtures the distinctive temperament of the students, carrying the most unforgettable memories of people's youth, but also shoulders the cultural infiltration, casting the soul of the centuries-old plan to educate people. The light and shadow changes in the film and TV drama works complement the visual performance of the cultural atmosphere, architectural landscape and natural scenery of the campus, which is not only conducive to the display of the strong academic atmosphere of institutions of higher learning and the beauty of the all-encompassing humanities, but also conducive to highlighting the advantages of Nanjing's higher education resources in an all-round way.

"The geo-cultural study of Chinese cinema focuses more on the integration of geographic factors with cultural, historical, and social factors, and in the spatial perspective, it focuses on the division of different geo-cultural regions of Chinese cinema, emphasizing the specific role of geographic factors in the creation of cinema art and the development of the industry. At the same time, it emphasizes that the historical development of film includes geographical and cultural factors, which means that the development of film cannot be separated from the influence and constraints of the geographical environment."^[4] The Nanjing elements in the above film and TV dramas are precisely based on the influence of Nanjing's geographic environment and history and culture. No matter whether they are historical blockbusters, costume dramas, or Republican dramas with the imprint of the times, or niche art films, or youthful films and romance dramas with market attraction, the creative teams will always be favorably disposed towards Nanjing. On the one hand, geo-culture provides a wide range of geographic space, natural landscape and even narrative style inspiration for film and television drama creation; on the other hand, diverse types of film and television drama works can better disseminate and publicize the local culture, create a space for regional characteristics, and shape the aesthetic image of the place, and the two have reached a mutually reinforcing symbiotic relationship. Scholar Zhong Sheng once pointed out that "the poetic cultural space of the Yangtze River has the connotation of the space of mountains and water, the space of people and cities, the space of artistic aesthetics, the space of entertainment and the space of family and national sentiment that transcends time and space"^[5], which aptly verifies the richness of the aesthetic image of Nanjing constructed by film and television productions as mentioned in the previous section.

To sum up, Nanjing, which combines the beauty of the ancient charm of natural landscape, the beauty of the common streets, the beauty of inclusive fashion and the beauty of profound humanities, with its multiple construction of aesthetic images in many film and television works, not only adds artistic infectivity and aesthetic value to the expression of visual images, but also provides a reference experience and

ideas for creators of film and television to pass on and develop the aesthetics of the Yangtze River, the culture of Jiangnan, and the geo-culture of Nanjing in the future. It not only adds artistic infection and aesthetic value to the expression of visual images, but also provides the creators of film and television with experience and ideas for the future inheritance and promotion of Yangtze River aesthetics, Jiangnan culture and geo-culture of Nanjing, which is bound to promote the sustainable development of the soft power of Nanjing's culture.

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