

# A Study of Spatial Aesthetics in the Film *The Sun Also Rises*

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## Abstract

*The Sun Also Rises* was released in 2007, directed by Jiang Wen, Zhou Yun, Chen Chong and other powerful actors. The film is not only wonderful content, but also twists and turns of the plot. The story runs from the 1950s to the 1970s and tells the story of the love dispute between Li Bukong and his crazy mother and his wife, as well as the fate of various characters such as Nanyang overseas Chinese teacher Liang and Nurse Lin. Director Jiang Wen broke the fixed narrative mode of the film and split the story together again, so that the space and time of the film have a wonderful visual perception impact. This paper will the film *The Sun Also Rises* the space aesthetics as the research object, the space aesthetics presented in the film, based on the film depends on the spatial image construction and shooting skills, in order to analyze and study the space aesthetics and the film of the value and significance.

**Keywords:** movie, symbol, space, aesthetics, *The Sun Also Rises*

## 1. Introduction

Film aesthetic thought is the research category of the expression content and expression technique of artistic aesthetic features in aesthetics. The film industry has made different attempts on how to mobilize technical means to play the great expressive and psychological effect of film art. Its development course includes montage tradition, documentary tradition, etc. Finally, in the 1920s, Germany and France have entered the stage of modern aesthetic ideological trend. Specifically, after the First World War, expressionism emerged in the countries represented by Germany. They tried to get rid of the appearance of things and

seek the so-called essence of things and the "eternal meaning". Take Dr. Calgary as an example, the development of expressionism follows the principle of observing the world subjectively. In 1958-1961, the modernist films, starting with the French new wave film movement, first brought the modernist films to the commercial screening network on a large scale. In 1986, the film was introduced to China. Its aesthetic view is the thought in traditional Chinese aesthetics, that is, the cognitive role of rational cognition in aesthetics and the moral power of social ethics. However, the filmmakers who flexibly use space aesthetics are still in a

minority, and the understanding of space aesthetics is relatively weak compared with foreign countries. Through Director Jiang Wen's unique shooting techniques, Director Jiang Wen skillfully combines space aesthetics into his own film and television works, presenting a very personal style of film space aesthetics to the public. Therefore, it is of certain value and significance to analyze the spatial aesthetics of films from Jiang Wen's work *The Sun Also Rises*. In addition, through the analysis and study of the spatial aesthetics of the film *The Sun Also Rises*, we can have a deeper understanding of the concept of spatial aesthetics, and how the film producers should apply the spatial aesthetics to the film and television works, so as to enrich the existing research results of predecessors.

## 2. Spatial Aesthetics Under the Term Visual Perception

### 2.1 Repeated and Superimposed Spatial Image: Spatial Discourse and Spatial Symbols

#### 2.1.1 Spatial Discourse

In the film, *As The Sun Also Rises*, all the characters express their desires and demands in their own field of consciousness, and release their inner thoughts in the space. The self-ideology of the subject is presented in space in the form of language, showing its inner world to the public. Spatial discourse starts from the "real life" process of the character and describes the reaction and development of "ideology". The spatial discourse of each film occurs around the subject, delicately shaping and depicting the characteristics of the subject.

Director Jiang Wen turned the crazy mother into a very sad role in the film, when she met a "loveliest person" at her best age and was pregnant with his child. But when she went to Xinjiang with great joy to find her sweetheart, she only saw her relics. Fate let her produce complex feelings: while remembering the dead sweetheart, while hating the betrayal of the sweetheart, this contradictory psychology leads to the crazy mother spirit of the disorder. The character of Crazy mother in the film is very personal. Film beginning crazy mother dream of a pair of shoes, and bought the shoes in real life, but accidentally lost it, then a talking parrot kept saying "I know, I know," the appearance of this sentence seems very nonsense,

but in the film finally revealed: crazy mother's husband once loves to say, "I know, I know". The director put this sentence at the beginning of the film to imply the important influence of Li Kong on the crazy mother. She was born with her love of the crystal child on the railway, but found the child again, and took him thousands of miles all the way to her husband's hometown, settled down. In the film, the crazy mother shouts out with her child: "Alisher, don't be afraid. The train stops on it, and he smiles brightly." This seemingly illogical words imply the spiritual redemption of the crazy mother. She was very glad that the child born on the track survived, and she also got spiritual comfort because of the birth of the life, and this sentence also laid the stage for why the crazy mother took her children to her husband's hometown. A series of words of crazy mother explained her relationship with Li not, also showed her rough and tragic love and fate from the side.

Spatial discourse in movies is usually an important carrier of spatial consciousness and spatial memory, which contains the inner emotions of the subject, with metaphors and hints, highlighting the emotional attributes of the subject image, so as to trigger the audience's association and thinking. The essence of the spatial subject is intuitive, and the spatial carrier of the material nature completes the questioning of the aesthetic discourse to the ultimate meaning of the life through the resonance of the soul.

#### 2.1.2 Spatial Symbols

Spatial symbol is a kind of "deep space" representing the latitude of art form and aesthetic implication. Its externalization of spatial aesthetic experience as the subject's visual perception is not only a material landscape with perceptual image in literature, but also an intention to condense the subject's aesthetic perception. For example, in the film *The Sun Also Rises*, the dazzling spatial symbols are presented in front of the audience, and each character is a symbol, a concrete presentation of a personality mask. In addition, the numerous symbols present in space surround the subject and reflect the representations of their spiritual core. In his preface to *Space Poetics*, Mr. Bi Hengda pointed out: "In *Space Poetics*, Bashra believes that's pace is not a container of fillings, but the residence of human consciousness."

(Gaston Bashra, 2009) (Zhu Hui, 2019) From this point of view to analyze the stone house built by crazy mother by the river in the film, it is not difficult to see that this space symbol is not just a house built by a stone. After the little captain secretly went into the stone house, he was surprised to find that everything in the house was something that he had been angry with his mother, but when he sneezed, he realized that these things were just pieced together, very broken. In the preface 1, Yu Dehui analyzed Bashra's theory of "dream" as "the soul around the space related to the boom of memory recall", "deep into the nature of things" and other aspects. (Gaston Bashra, 2009) (Andre Bzan, 1987) Crazy mother will be her past sealed in the stone house, in this space, her memories and "dream" are eternal existence, escape the limit of time, those who have about her teenage years of love, beloved men are together in the new life in the space. As a spatial carrier of the crazy mother's spirit, the stone house symbolizes the home of her soul. Bashra once expressed in the book that "Home is the corner of the world, protecting the daydreams and protecting the dreamer." (Gaston Bashra, 2009) (Pei Xuan, 2019) The spatial symbols represented by the stone house mean the residence of the crazy mother's "dream", where she freely recalls, and may even fill in the missing love in her mind. In her long life, all the regrets and regrets she has experienced stay in the space in a unique form, thus achieving a new life. At the end of the story of crazy mother, the subject chooses to disappear in everyone's vision in a blurred form, while "dream" and "memory" always linger in the space. Plato believes: "Beauty exists in the madness of ideas, inspiration and soul memories. The subject expresses emotions and claims through the perception of space, and finally conveys them with spatial symbols as the carrier." (Plato, 2018)

At the beginning and at the end of the film, flowers appear in full bloom. The recurrence of this scene is not only the original echo of the film, but also an important clue to connect the story as a whole. Director Jiang Wen narrated the story and the subject respectively by disrupting the timeline, so that the audience can feel the weight of life while feeling the absurd and weird. Such a unique shooting technique is extreme and shows a different kind of tenderness. The space symbol of

the rails is not only what the crazy mother saw in reality when she was young, but also a scene in dreams. This surreal image brings the audience infinite reverie and thinking. In reality, the crazy mother had born the baby on the track, but in the dream, she saw a pair of shoes on the track. The connection between the two is what the crazy mom's inner emotional world thinks of. Through the function of space symbols, the essence of life is further displayed. They occur around the subject, and the subject relies on spatial symbols to place its own emotional orientation. The two are interdependent, making the film plot and the structure of the story more rigorous and perfect, and the subject image is fuller and more three-dimensional. It is a common shooting skill in films to express the spirit of the characters. In the development of films, the role of spatial symbols will only become more and more important. The metaphor of spatial symbols constructs a complete narrative prototype in the film and television works, which is presented in front of the audience, and the subject's unconscious or conscious inner activity slowly breaks through the fog. And this roundabout and euphemistic form of expression reflects more aesthetic feeling.

## 2.2 The Integration of Subject Sensibility and Poetry

The subject has a dialogue with the space, and the state of the subject in the space is the poetic emotion of the subject. The state of the subject in the space reflects the emotional attributes of the subject, and each character exists uniquely in its own space. Through the integration of "material and poetry", he releases his inner emotions, so as to complete his own transcendental consciousness and achieve the transcendence of life. The integration of the subject experience and the real space becomes the field of emotional resonance between the subject and the object.

In *The Sun Also Rises*, there is a character in space with a very special state, Teacher Liang. Mr. Liang is a clean, elegant manners, with petty bourgeois sentiment of Nanyang overseas Chinese, such a character role shaping for Mr. Liang by the majority of women around the love to pave the way. However, the director has set such a role "butt" event, put the subject into a full of sexual suggestion environment, in the process of suspicion, Mr. Liang present state is very embarrassing, his heart believes that "Qing", but

in the face of one after one admirer, Mr. Liang's faith was shaken, especially after that Dr Lin design framed himself, Mr. Liang feel he lost his dignity. So, after being cleared, he committed suicide.

Mr. Liang is not only the victim of an era, but also one of the representatives of jumping out from The Times. He broke through the shackles of The Times and has his own spiritual pursuit and values. He expressed his expectation to life in the space: at the beginning of the story, he sang the girls in the kitchen, pure, romantic, but his simple and romance in front of reality, in the face of accusations and criticism, the spiritual world to the extreme collapse, unable to adapt to the time environment, he is in a state of panic and tension. Through his death, the film implicitly expresses the fate of the new ideas represented by Teacher Liang under the current of The Times, and also let us see the germination of new ideas in such an era.

The fusion of sensibility and poetic nature has created such a clean, pure, free and uninhibited image of Mr. Liang. The poetic space and perceptual space of the space subject make such some unique individuals. The emotional space they present on the screen infects the public in front of the screen, and thus arouses the poetic resonance of the audience.

### 3. Space Modeling Techniques of the Film

Space is not only merged with time, but also juxtaposed between different spaces. The cross-use of montage and long shots is a common shooting technique in film works. Film production experienced pure use of montage to adopt long lens to the last of the combination of the evolution, montage and long lens opened the new world of film and television production, many film producers in the use of shooting skills naturally chose the cross-use shooting skills, in order to enrich and improve their own work.

#### 3.1 Montage and Splicing Space

Montage makes the audience feel the unity of space with the local and comprehensive overall space, connects the space paragraphs through a single lens, stays in the dimension of time, and adds sound effects to make the plot of the film more tension and the visual effect more impact, thus making the artistic atmosphere dizzy. Montage's shooting techniques have been more

widely used in modern film and television works. More and more directors and producers make the film more visual impact through the montage technique, thus deepening the impression of the audience. McLuhan argued that "human feeling can produce space" (Marshall McLuhan, 2000) Through the infection of visual space, the audience can feel the connotation of the film more directly, so as to produce their own emotional space, and produce the emotional bond between the film. In *The Sun Also Rises*, the combination of color and sound effects makes the subject's personality, emotional performance, and the unfolding of the film's theme all play just right.

Jiang Wen presents the time of the four stories to the audience: The first story, "Crazy", "clothes float away down the river, and then the picture jumps to the time when Liang and Tang worked at school. The two seem to be unrelated, but at the end of the story, the film tells us: it turns out that Teacher Tang is the crazy mother never forget the old man "Alosha", but the subject of this story is not the Tang teacher, he transferred the main body to Mr. Liang, giving him a soul in pursuit of freedom. This may seem out of place with the whole film, but in fact, every subject in the film has its own pursuit. In this story, seemingly calm, but in fact, the shadow flow, it reveals the Tang teacher's romantic from the side, and even finally, the Mr. Liang because of his life paid the price of the romantic story. At the end of the story, reveals the background of the main body, and the connection between the main body, crazy mother after the death, resolutely choose to take unborn children to lover's hometown, picture another scene is "Liao sand" and other women in the desert wedding, and crazy mother on the train after their wedding. The absurd and grotesque style makes people confused about whether it is in reality or in a dream, and the spatial juxtaposition of the two plots makes people feel incredible, but they have to sigh that this scene is perfect.

The unfolding of the story plot and the story development of the subject are all carried out in the space, and the multiple dimensional space converges in the flow of consciousness of the subject. Time is no longer a simple latitude in movies. In Jiang Wen's film works, the limitations of time symbolize an era and can also aerial an era. Frag stories are like a puzzle, and clues can restore



them into a whole. Therefore, in Jiang Wen's book *The Sun Also Rises*, many seemingly illogical storylines delicately and romantically tell the subject's rich and complete life. The film's timeline is disrupted, but it is even more authentic and more touching. The juxtaposition of space breaks through the expression mode of time and space in the traditional sense, making the scope of time and space broader and more flexible.

### 3.2 Long Lens and Deep Space

Long lens aesthetics was proposed by Bzan: "Over time it evolved into different forms." (Andre Bzan, 1987) French New Wave, New Hollywood, Danish Douma 95 and countless independent production directors have tried their own long-shot style and injected their own efforts and artistic insights. In Ban's theory of long-shot space aesthetics, there are three aspects: "the reality of the object; the reality of time and space, and the reality of narrative structure." (Andre Bzan, 1987) He believes that the horizontal and flat space can make the audience feel more real. Such as *The Sun Also Rises* in the "dream" this story: at the end of the film, crazy mother ride after lover "Teacher Tang" and his lover Kong Wei wedding the train, adopted the depth of field lens, let the audience as if place oneself, immersive, feel the train from the side, the roar of the train in the ear. Liang hung himself from the wall with a gun belt, with a smile, then the camera stretched out and turned to Tang and others, but it was hard to see their expressions. This shot does not give an exact answer, and it is because of this that the audience causes different thinking and reverie.

The interweaving of montage technique color and music makes the artistic style of the film more biased. Lay down the basic pattern of the work. The use of deep-scene lens helps make the film deeper, bringing different aesthetic experience to the audience visually, not limited to a narrow visual range, so that the line of sight becomes more open with the reaching of the lens. The cross-use of the two shooting methods of long shots in the film makes the whole film more layered, and it also highlights the fantasy of Jiang Wen's film.

## 4. The Value of Space Aesthetics

### 4.1 The Aesthetics of the Film Virtual Space

Filmmakers in the film in the virtual space and

scene created by the film producer, space virtual sex and fantasy inspired us in the real space is difficult to detect the mood and beauty, film theme in the film space story and emotional entanglement, pull the audience from reality into the virtual film space, feel their time and space of a series of stories, so as to achieve the effect of empathy and empathy.

Virtual time and space, virtual subject and virtual story content are not completely giving the audience a false emotional experience, on the contrary, they create the space for the movie subject love and hate, happiness has a more direct clear experience, all the love and hate, desire and appeal, sadness and joy can timely convey to the audience, in these emotions, the connection between space is very subtle, virtual space and real space boundaries only a screen. Our dreams and pursuits advance and retreat together with the subject, such an emotional sublimation produces a variety of beauty, such as regret beauty, missing beauty, perfect beauty and so on. The aesthetics of the virtual space permeates into the real life, infecting the audience in front of the screen, so that our dreams and beautiful fantasies can be satisfied in another form. We place our emotions on the main body of the film and let them carry our expectations and wishes to develop, so as to achieve the spiritual satisfaction.

### 4.2 The Meaning of the Projection to the Real Space

Under the trend of rapid development of Internet information technology, relying on modern information technology, mass media has greatly exceeded the limitation of time and space. The spatial aesthetics of the film and literature, national culture, modern architecture constantly integrate, feedback to all aspects of real life.

Compared with other modes of communication, movies are a very intuitive and powerful communication tool. On the basis of spreading images and entertaining the public, film also carry the significance of culture. Under the action of film space aesthetics, the different customs and habits of various ethnic groups are understood and inclusive. In the film, the public opens their horizons and experience the beauty of different ethnic customs and the cultural beauty of different countries, so as to gradually improve their own tolerance of culture. With the progress of The

Times, we constantly get new life inspiration and inspiration from the aesthetics of film space.

The spatial form created by the film triggered people's thinking about the real society, thus deepening the aesthetics in the space. When the audience watches the film, the budding emotional space is sublimated, and the spiritual demands are satisfied. Under the action of visual perception, visual aesthetics and auditory aesthetics occur at the same time. As the subject in reality, we perceive the main image of the film and consider the course of our own life, the beauty in real life and the meaning of life given by time and space from another perspective. Space aesthetic value concept extends from the film to life, when we think about their own life, whether with the film is similar subject experience or subject emotion, poetic and emotional cognition from the subject of the reality, the film's aesthetic meaning is not only the content of the film, but more is also we as emotional subject derived from the feelings of beauty. Our aesthetic appreciation and the aesthetic art of the film advance together, which is the gift given to us by the beauty under the promotion of The Times, but also the precious wealth given to the film production.

## 5. Epilogue

Through the analysis of the spatial aesthetics of director Jiang Wen's *The Sun Also Rises*, we can see that the production of his films is very ingenious. In Jiang Wen's films, the audience can see the connotation and charm of the director himself, as well as the humanistic care and historical value highlighted in the works.

The application of space aesthetics in film works makes the modern film industry constantly innovative, more innovative and aesthetic. At the same time also constantly deepen the theory of space aesthetics in society, the space aesthetics into various fields, make literature and film fusion, make up for the blank and limitations of both sides, make the public through more widely more general way to understand the meaning of the space aesthetics, let the individual spirit and aesthetic taste and interest get sublimation. However, the application of spatial aesthetics in film works is still a niche in today's film and television industry and has not been popularized. More directors choose film types that fit the

secularization, pay attention to the commercial value of films, and lack of independent thinking and deep meaning worth exploring.

Therefore, the application of space aesthetics to film works can not only show the director's personal ideological connotation and artistic pursuit, but also reflect the aesthetic level and aesthetic needs of the public. At the same time, there are still many shortcomings in the analysis of the film space aesthetics based on the previous research conclusions of this paper. The film space aesthetics has a deeper value and significance waiting for the research and exploration.

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