A Study on the Literary Landscape of Taohua Island in Legends of the Condor Heroes

Changlin Wu 1, a, Jiaxin Wan 1, b

1 School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nanchang, Jiangxi 330013, China;

a 420560545@qq.com, b 952154080@qq.com

Abstract. The writer Louis Cha took the Taohua Island in Zhoushan, Zhejiang Province as the prototype, and built a fairyland with martial arts flavor in his book Legends of the Condor Heroes. The natural landscape of Taohua Island thus turns into a literary landscape after literary writing. Later readers combined their own aesthetic feeling to construct an ideal Taohua Island in their hearts, forming an aesthetic space. The Taohua Islands in nature, in literature and in readers' hearts are interrelated, which shape the three-layer spaces of the landscape of Taohua Island and give Taohua Island its unique connotation of martial arts wonderland. Exploring the unique cultural value of Taohua Island will help the construction and development of its natural landscape.

Keywords: Taohua Island; Legends of the Condor Heroes; Literary Landscape; Literary Geography.

1. Introduction

When the petals fly on the Taohua Island, playing Jade flute Sword Law with sword and Blue Sea Tide Song with jade flute. This is the scenery of Taohua Island Jin Yong described in the martial arts novel Legends of the Condor Heroes. Jin Yong introduced the real Taohua Island into his literary works, therefore, literature collided with physical geography. Taohua Island changed from a natural landscape to a literary landscape, which became one of the unique contents of literary geography.

2. Move the Scenery of Natural Taohua Island into Literary Taohua Island

The scenery in Taohua Island described by Jin Yong is beautiful. When the character Guo Jing and Huang Rong went up on the island together in chapter 16, he also gave an account of the Taohua Island: “[The ship is near the island, Guo Jing has smelled the flowers in the sea breeze, looking far away, the island is lush with a group of green, red, yellow, and white flowers.”] [1] When Guo Jing was infatuated with the scenery with full praise, Huang Rong said: “It is summer now, many flowers have fallen. If in March of spring, the peach blossoms on the island are in full bloom, it will be beautiful.”[2] A few short words tell the infinite beauty of Taohua Island, giving people endless imagination, thus make people can not help but want to explore the trace of Taohua Island in reality.

Zhang Weiran, a historical geographer, pointed out: “The novels of the Middle Ages are often fictitious on characters and times, however, the spatial scenes mostly could trace back to real life, so that historians often cite novels as spatial historical materials, which should be a very noteworthy feature in Chinese literature.”[3] In fact, this is true not only of the novels of the Middle Ages, but also of most literary styles of other periods. If there is no natural or humanistic geographical space that exists objectively, it is difficult for writers to create a new literary geographical space out of thin air in their works.[4] The same is true of Taohua Island. From April 6 to 8, 1994, Mr. Jin Yong
and his wife Ms. Lin Leyi arrived at Zhoushan Putuo for a visit and said: “If people want to confirm whether the original of Taohua Island in the East China Sea in the book of *The Legend of the Condor Heroes* is Taohua Island in Zhoushan Islands, I say yes.” *Legends of the Condor Heroes* was written from 1957 to 1959. When Jin Yong wrote the book *Legends of the Condor Heroes*, he admitted that he needed an island on the sea, “with a little romantic appeal, it can not be too close to the mainland, nor too far away.” As a Zhejiang native, Jin Yong found in the geography book that the Taohua Island was in a very appropriate position, with a large area and few people in the Southern Song Dynasty, and is very suitable for the characters like the eastern heretic apothecary Huang, Lotus Huang, Zhou Botong and other people to set up a world of activity. Therefore, Taohua Island has become a geographical space carrying important cultural functions in Jin Yong's martial arts fictions.

Taohua Island in Zhoushan, Zhejiang Province not only be rich for fishing town customs and folk culture, but also has a strong mythology. Rumors of the development of the island began in the Qin and Han dynasties. According to a historical record in Song Dynasty: “Taohua Mountain... according to legend, a Taoist named An Qisheng learned alchemy here. Once he got drunk and sprinkled the ink on the rocks, and the ink became peach blossom pattern with strange shape while as if natural. The stones were then collected and regarded as treasures, therefore, people named it Taohua Mountain.”[5] The Taohua Island enjoys a fascinating scenery with high mountains and blue sea. If the tourists stand on the high mountains by the sea to see the scenery, he could appreciate a poetic and panoramic view, then can not help but sigh what a fairyland. The beauty and mystery of Taohua Island has attracted many literati and writers of all ages to come here for sightseeing and searching for ancient research. Since the Taoist An Qisheng first went to the island in the pre-Qin Dynasty, Minister Li Shaochun in the Han Dynasty, writer Su Shi in the Song Dynasty, poet Wu Lai in the Yuan Dynasty, military strategist Zhu Wan in the Ming Dynasty, poets Zhu Xu and Miao Sui in the Qing Dynasty, contemporary martial arts literature master Jin Yong, poet Fang Mu, and so on, each of them have left works that are combined with real scenes, constantly supplementing and deepening the cultural landscape and marine culture of Taohua Island. Among them, Jin Yong's martial arts literature are the most widely known. Jin Yong took Taohua Island in Zhoushan as the prototype and introduced in his book *The Legend of the Condor Heroes*, making it the residence of the pharmacist Huang and constructing a dreamlike world of martial arts for readers.

Taohua Island after Jin Yong's depiction has become full of martial arts color. When mention Taohua Island, people will think of the island master Pharmacist Huang together with his divine sword and jade flute. Taohua Island is no longer a simple natural landscape after literary writing, it has a layer of literary color compared with other natural landscapes. Zeng Daxing, president of the Chinese Literary Geographical Society, put forward a clear definition of literary landscape in his book *Introduction to Literary Geography*: “The so-called literary landscape is the natural or humanistic landscape with literary attributes and literary functions. Literary landscape is closely related to literature. It is the result of the interaction between geographical environment and literature. It is the presentation of literature in geography.”[6] Jin Yong carried out artistic processing on the natural landscape of Taohua Island, and made it integrated into literary works to form a literary space to present to readers. Therefore, Taohua Island has corresponding literary connotation, transforming from a natural landscape to a literary landscape.

In terms of its existing form, literary landscapes can be divided into two types: virtual literary landscapes and substantive literary landscapes. Virtual literary landscapes (literary interior landscapes) refers to the landscapes described by writers in their works, while substantive literary landscapes (literary exterior landscapes) refers to the landscapes shaped by writers in real life.[7] Literary geography believes that both virtual and substantive literary landscapes can be understood from the following three aspects: one is the objectively existing landscape, that is, the first space of literature; the second is the landscape described by the writers, that is, the second space of literature; the third is the landscape re-created by literary readers based on the first and second kinds of landscape, combined with their own geographical cognition and aesthetic association, which is the third space of literature. The three layers complement each other and interact with each other.

3.1 The First Space: The Space of Real Existence

The first space refers to the real natural and humanistic geographical space, which is objective and material. Taking Taohua Island in Legends of the Condor Heroes as an example, the first space is the Taohua Island in Putuo, Zhoushan, Zhejiang Province. It is a natural geographical space, an objective material entity, and the basis for literary creation. As the foundation of humanistic environment, natural environment provides the first space for literary creation together with humanistic environment. The first space has a profound influence on literary creation and literary aesthetic.

For literary creation, the first space not only provides writers with inexhaustible subject matter, but also profoundly influences the style of literary works. The themes of literary works are mainly in three categories: the natural environment or natural scenery, the social environment or social life, or the emotional world or emotional life. Due to the restriction of objective conditions, the first and third themes are the majority. The natural environment is undoubtedly one of the important themes of literary creation. In addition, the natural environment also has a deep influence on the style of literary works. As the famous writer Bing Xin said: “The literary works a writer created have a close relationship with the environment he grew up.”[8] As a typical Zhejiang man, Jin Yong's temperament is deeply influenced by the natural and dynamic humanistic spirit of Zhejiang, and his works naturally show relevant styles when he engages in literary creation with such temperament. Moreover, the prototype of Taohua Island described in the book is also located in Zhejiang Province, and the style of his literary works and literary landscape is very regional characteristics of Zhejiang.

For literary aesthetic, the influence of natural environment (the first space) is indirect and invisible, and needs literary works (the second space) to be the medium and bridge. Different natural landscapes have different sightseeing customs. Taohua Island is full of romantic and precipitous color in nature, and is also rich of martial arts color after Jin Yong’s writing, both of which bring different aesthetic feelings to literary readers. In addition, the existence of natural geographical space provides an objective environment for readers to rely on in literary aesthetics, and their literary aesthetic feelings have a real and tangible geographical space to be pursued, which creates a sense of reality for readers in literary reading, and then provides an objective basis for readers to exert their imagination and build literary aesthetic space.
3.2 The Second Space: The Space of Literary Creation

The second space refers to the literary geographical space constructed by the writer in his works based on the first space and integrated with his own imagination, association and creation. This space is the product of the writer's subjective creation. The landscape of Taohua Island described in *the Legend of the Condor Heroes* is the second space of literature. This kind of space possesses both distinct regional characteristics and some universal meaning of life. The literary geographical space is the central link of the three spaces, which is of great significance to the natural geographical space and the literary re-creation space.

The virtual literary landscape of Taohua Island (the second space) in Jin Yong's works is based on the natural geographical landscape (the first space), which in turn has a profound impact on the shaping and development of the natural geographical landscape. The literary works of *the Legend of the Condor Heroes* were widely popular once they were published, and have been adapted into many TV dramas and dance dramas. Therefore, the scenic spot of the Taohua Island in Putuo was fully developed. People not only planted flowers and trees according to the scenery described in the book, but also built cultural landscapes such as the Condor Film and Television Town. Besides, they built many famous places such as the residence of Pharmacist Huang, Niujia Village and the Iron Gun Temple. The island is full of martial arts, for which Jin Yong inscribed “Blue Sea and Golden Sand in Taohua Island”.

Compared with the natural geographical space, the literary space constructed by writers has a direct impact on readers' literary aesthetic space. A natural landscape can only transform into a literary landscape after the writing of a famous writer, and readers can only carry out literary aesthetic and re-creation of this natural landscape after reading literary works. It can be seen that the geographical space created by literature is indispensable as a bridge connecting the natural space and the space re-created by literature. The second space created by Jin Yong is the direct source of readers’ aesthetic creation. Readers will naturally be full of imagination on Taohua Island after reading *Legends of the Condor Heroes*. Different readers have different aesthetic feelings, resulting in their own unique emotional experience and creating a rich and colorful aesthetic space.

3.3 The Third Space: The Space of Literary Re-creation

On the basis of the first space and the second space, the third space is a literary aesthetic space which is further recreated by literary readers in combination with their own life experience and aesthetic feelings. This space is also subjective and has a unique aesthetic understanding. If the first space is regarded as the willows standing by the river, then the reflection of the willows in the river is the second space, which is not an invariable reflection of the objectively existing willows, but a distorted, deformed and artistically processed willows, while the reflection of the willows in the eyes of tourists is the third space, which is the shadow of the shadow. Different readers have different aesthetic experience when they receive literature, and the reflection of willows they see is also different. The construction of literary aesthetic space also has an important impact on the objective natural space and the literary space created by writers.

For the natural geographical space, the building of literary aesthetic space could boost local tourism. Literature is characterized by vivid imagery. After reading literary works, readers will inevitably have infinite longing for the literary landscape in the works and full of curiosity and expectation for the landscape prototype existing in reality. This feeling will prompt readers to have
a willingness to visit the landscape prototype, thus promote the development of local tourism and stimulate local economic consumption. Putuo has built a series of related martial arts tourist attractions based on Jin Yong's description in the Legend of the Condor Heroes, which have undoubtedly attracted many martial arts fans to visit and contribute to the local economic construction. In addition, readers' unique aesthetic feelings after visiting the natural landscape of Taohua Island will also enrich the aesthetic meaning of the natural landscape.

The literary aesthetic space re-created by readers according to the literary geographic space constructed by writers will in turn give the literary geographic space more abundant connotation. Literary readers come to visit Taohua Island with a strong longing. They will inevitably have a deeper understanding of the world depicted in the work after visiting, which is readers who have not personally experienced the natural scenery of Taohua Island in Zhoushan cannot understand. Thus, a deeper literary aesthetic experience will be further generated. The space formed by this unique aesthetic feeling will intangibly broaden the literary geographical space and enrich the martial arts color of literary works. If readers express their aesthetic experience through oral language or literary works, such as admiring chat during sightseeing or travel works formed after sightseeing, it will transform the intangible into tangible, which will not only shape the space of literary re-creation, but also enrich the space of literary works.

4. Explore the Value of Literary Landscape to Guide the Construction of Natural Landscape

The three layers of Taohua Island are interrelated and influenced each other, which gives the unique cultural connotation to the literary landscape of Taohua Island. Based on the natural geographical space of Taohua Island, the second space of literary creation and the third space of literary aesthetics not only convey the rich literary value of Taohua Island, but also have guiding significance for the development and construction of the objectively existing landscape of Taohua Island.

4.1 Three Spaces Create a Martial Arts Wonderland

The charm of literary landscape is huge, and its charm comes from the charm of literature. Only when a landscape has the value of literature can it be considered as having the highest value. Liu Renben, a literatus in Yuan Dynasty, mentioned in his work: “Natural landscape such as mountains and rivers, forests and springs, its reputation can be revealed only after the chanting and writing of litterateurs.”[9] The same is true of Taohua Island, which is transformed from an ordinary natural landscape to a famous literary landscape through the literary geographical space created by Jin Yong in the Legend of the Condor Heroes. As Mike Crang pointed out when he talked about the geographical landscape of literature, “Literature cannot be regarded simply as a description of certain regions and places. In many cases it is literature that helps to create them.”[10] The image of Taohua Island, in the minds of people who have not visited the original is very abstract or vague, but with the writing of literature, people will generate rich associations or imagination, so the image of Taohua Island will emerge in the mind, becoming specific and touchable, and then produce the desire or plan to have a visit. This is the great function of the figurative nature of literature. The figurative nature of literature is easy to arouse people's yearning for related landscapes and stimulate people's rich geographical imagination. For example, when it comes to Taohua Island, people will think of the changeable and elusive array on the island, think of the fierce battle
between Ouyang Feng and Hong Qigong, think of the love story in Guo Jing and Huang Rong ... Therefore, the desire of some day to visit is born, which will fall into reality after people have leisure and entangled, and this also provides the possibility for the development of literary re-creation.

Taohua Island has the elements and values of literature once it is written. It has become a literary landscape and formed three spaces of literature. The joint action of these three spaces gives Taohua Island its unique meaning. The literary landscape of Taohua Island in Jin Yong's writing has been infused with a profound martial arts atmosphere. Pharmacist Huang, Zhou Botong, Hong Qigong, Ouyang Feng, Seven Freaks of the South and a large number of protagonists are related to Taohua Island, and most of them are vigorous and unrestrained in behaviour, creating a chivalrous, free and easy image for readers. As for the Taohua Island of natural landscape, it enjoys enchanting scenery with lush flowers and trees, together with golden sand and blue sea, full of romantic color, therefore, it is regarded as a fairyland on earth by a number of tourists. No wonder the Qing Dynasty poet Zhu Xu left poems Taohua Mountain and Taohua Dragon Pool to praise the scenery of Taohaua Island. Among them, the poem Taohua Mountain in particular points out the feeling of viewing around the island, which said: “Ink marks by drunkenly sprinkled on the stones, where the pattern turned into peach blossom gorgeous like sunset glow. People said the spring scenery in Wuling is good, it is wrong because they haven’t visit here.” The combination of the martial arts flavor of the second space and the natural scenery of the first space creates the unique aesthetic connotation of Taohua Island -- a fairyland with martial arts style. And the vivid image of literature makes the Taohua Island rich in chivalrous style arouse readers' infinite reveries, forming the third space of literary aesthetic, and further enrich its literary value.

4.2 Guide Reality to Create a Martial Arts Wonderland

The influence of Jin Yong's writing on Taohua Island in Zhoushan is not only reshaping the natural scenery of Taohua Island scenic area, making the real world Taohua Island closer to the Taohua Island described by Jin Yong, but also adding a strong cultural atmosphere, such as the construction of humanistic landscape such as the Condor Film and Television Town and the Jin Yong Martial Arts Culture Village. Since the construction of the Condor Film and Television Town in 2001, an endless stream of tourists have come to visit Taohua Island every year, bringing about huge pressure to the local tourism industry. Combining with the unique chivalrous cultural connotation of Taohua Island landscape, the paper put forward advises toward the construction of Taohua Island natural landscape.

4.2.1 Architectural Color

Taohua Island has strong island customs. Similar to the color style of most island buildings, Taohua Island also chooses white as the main color in residential buildings. The white wall and the black roof can give people a clean and strictly forbidden visual feeling, but watching these two colors for a long time will bring monotonous visual psychology to tourists, so it is necessary to use a new color to adjust the cold and warm tone. Compared with other colors, the saturation of red is higher, and the visual feeling brought by people is more intense. At the same time, red also represents the vitality, symbolizing blood and brave and tenacious spirit, which is very consistent with the chivalrousness spirit of Taohua Island. Applying red to doors, windows, roofs and other local embellishment could not only make the black and white tone of buildings no longer appear too
dull, but also present the moral courage of chivalry in Southern Song Dynasty described in the Legend of the Condor Heroes.

4.2.2 Specialty Food

Taohua Island, which belongs to the island type tourist attractions, is naturally dominated by seafood products in terms of food culture. On the basis of making every effort to build the island food brand, Taohua Island should also combine its own characteristics and advantages to create an unique food culture. Homestays and restaurants can take the classic food in Jin Yong's martial arts novel The Legend of the Condor Heroes as the prototype, and produce classic food related to movies and TV dramas, such as “beggar’s chicken” made by Hong Qigong, cuisine named “Moonlight Night on 24 Bridges” and soup called “A Gentleman’s Good Mate” made by Huang Rong, etc., to increase tourists' sense of integration and form the characteristic food culture of Taohua Island. In addition to providing relevant food, restaurants can also popularize the martial arts culture behind the food to tourists, such as designing question-and-answer sessions to test tourists' understanding of the work, or providing tourists with ingredients to make relevant food themselves, creating a real feeling of returning to the Southern Song Dynasty and living in the world described in the novels.

4.2.3 Sports Program

From the perspective of the age distribution of tourists in Taohua Island over the years, the young and middle-aged account for the vast majority of tourists, so the exciting adventure sports programs will certainly attract the attention of many tourists. As a martial arts novel, the Legend of the Condor Heroes has numerous scenes of martial arts competition. For example, Guo Jing once fought with Ouyang Feng on Taohua Island. Therefore, under the premise of ensuring the safety of the project, the scenic spot can provide tourists with some featured extreme sports involved in the Legend of the Condor Heroes, such as providing wire or other props, so that tourists can experience the extraordinary flying skills with the guidance and assistance of the staff. At the same time, the scenic spot should clarify its own positioning, and try to make some projects with competitive and conflict relations dispersed in space when setting amusement projects, thus reduce the interference between different projects.

4.2.4 Cultural Products

The development of interesting cultural and creative products is the way to innovate tourism products. With the development of tourism and the change of tourists' consumption concept, cultural and creative products with characteristics and innovative factors are more and more welcomed by tourists. Taohua Island should also innovate and design tourism products corresponding to its cultural connotation, and create cultural and creative products with its own characteristics. There are many classic lines in Jin Yong's martial arts novels, such as “Highlight dragon’s shame”, “Where there is people, there is engagement.”, etc. in the Legend of the Condor Heroes. Scenic spots can print these classic lines on fans or make stickers. When visitors see the stickers and open the fans, they seem to be in the book and turn into characters in the book.

5. Conclusion

As a classic martial arts novel, Legends of the Condor Heroes established Jin Yong's status as a master of martial arts novels. The novel is based on the history of the Southern Song Dynasty's resistance against the two powerful enemies of Jin and Mongolia, and is full of patriotic nationalism.
The Taohua Island where the protagonist Huang Rong lived and grew up is an important geographical space in the book, and there is also a prototype to follow in real life. On the one hand, the literary landscape of Taohua Island shaped by Jin Yong relies on the natural landscape; on the other hand, it gives the natural landscape new humanistic significance and new aesthetic value, and creates a fairyland with martial arts style together with the natural landscape. Explore the unique value of the literary landscape of Taohua Island, clarify the positioning of the scenic spot, and construct the scenic spot by adding architectural colors on the island, providing specialty food, setting extreme sports, and making interesting cultural products, could help promote the chivalric culture and national patriotic enthusiasm involved in the Legend of the Condor Heroes.

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