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In search of Lin Zhao's soul = 寻找林昭的靈魂

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In Search of Lin Zhao’s Soul

Director’s profile - Hu Jie

- Born in 1958.
- Graduated from the Art College for the People’s Liberation Army, where he majored in oil painting.
- Begins to make documentaries in 1995.
- In 2008, his documentary film Though I Am Gone won one of the grand prizes at the Fourth Reel China Documentary Biennial.
- Interested in exposing the forbidden political issues as in the films In Search of Lin Zhao’s Soul and Though I Am Gone. He believes “Because the Chinese official authority does not want us to remember the history, we non-official people should remember on our own.” 1


Synopsis

In Search of Lin Zhao’s Soul explores the Chinese Communist Party’s political persecution of the intellectual Lin Zhao and her individual courage in the face of the absolute totalitarianism of Mao’s China and the dramatic times she lived in.

A brief timeline of Lin Zhao’s struggling: In 1960 Lin Zhao was first arrested in Suzhou for being a Counterrevolutionary and eventually sentenced to a 20-year term. Eight years later, she was executed secretly.

- In the film, Hu Jie uses a wide spectrum of materials like interviews with Lin Zhao’s relatives and former schoolmates to reconstruct her life and being.
- Includes a great deal of Lin’s poetry, political manifestos and letters in blood to depict her strong character.

Production History

- The film was produced from 2000 to 2004.
- In an interview with Shen Rui, Hu Jie (2005) said that, “The film is inspired by her courage, and her uncompromising sense of justice… It was extraordinary that a great woman like Lin Zhao once lived in China… I thought she was a national treasure.” 2

Obstacles

- The director’s employer, Xinhua News Agency transferred the pressure from the authority (The Bureau of Public Safety saw Hu as suspicious.) to him and wanted him to quit his job, just as he was starting to do research on “the dead woman”.
- There were not a lot of research resources, so all the director could do was locate people who knew Lin Zhao.
- But interviewees feared to speak out the truth due to the possibility of investigations by the secret police.
- It is extremely difficult to find the manuscripts and poems of Lin Zhao; eventually Hu Jie could only find the copy of a copy of a copy.
- At the same time, Hu was running out of the money needed to proceed with his journey.
- Slow and difficult mission: more research, more time and more money were needed.

Types of documentary

- Interactive – The film has an interview style: Hu Jie acts as a central character and partner as a way of presenting the issues.
- Expository – The director narrates his film himself through a voice-over.

Reception

- Cui Wei Ping: “This is an epic to record a hero’s achievement and circulate a hero’s story.” 3
- China Rights Forum: “Hu Jie’s documentary successfully uses film angles, visuals and music to coolly yet emotionally depict the beauty of Lin Zhao’s spirit and her loving and virtuous nature.” 4
- Generally speaking, historians saw the film as a breakthrough and as a disclosure of the naked truths. Older viewers found it very moving and thanked Hu Jie for not forgetting their suffering experience. Younger viewers embraced the film because they now knew more about their own country and felt inclined to rethink certain social and political issues.

Discussion

- Why do you think that Lin Zhao and Hu Jie both took the risk of offending the Chinese government?
- Lin Zhao and Hu Jie paid dearly for pursuing their convictions. How do you feel about their decisions?
- Why is it important to have a documentary rather than a mere text recording important historical events?

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尋找林昭的靈魂

導演簡介—胡杰

- 生於1958年；
- 1989年入讀解放軍藝術學院主修油畫；
- 1995年拍攝第一部紀錄片；
- 2008年《我離死去》獲香港舉辦的首屆華語紀錄片獎最佳長片獎；
- 以電影去揭露中國政治敏感事件，例如《尋找林昭的靈魂》及《我離死去》。他認為由於中國官方機關不希望我們記住歷史，我們非官方的人應該記得我們自己國家的過去。


故事概要

《尋找林昭的靈魂》是一套關於知識分子林昭在毛澤東極權主義下遭遇政治迫害。她在反右運動中被判罪，在文革中被判處死刑，電影探討她面對迫害時的無比勇氣，及其戲劇性的一生。

林昭的掙扎生涯：1960年以「反革命」罪名被捕，囚禁於上海提籃橋監獄，數年後被判二十年有期徒刑，其間被秘密槍決。

- 胡杰搜集了不同種類的資料去重組林昭的個人生平，當中他訪問了很多和林昭有接觸的人如親友、同事等等；
- 電影同時亦展示了林昭的作品，如她在獄中用鮮血寫成的詩句、政治宣言及書信。

拍攝過程

《尋找林昭的靈魂》從2000年開始拍攝至2004年完成。

- 胡杰在2005年接受訪問時，曾談及對林昭的看法：「這部電影的靈感是源自於她勇敢的個性，那種不妥協的正義感……尤其在中國社會上出現像林昭這樣優秀的女性更是難得……我認為她是我們國家的瑰寶。」

拍攝的困難

- 當任職新華社攝影師的胡杰著手進行林昭的資料搜尋時，被官方發覺，基於林昭在國內的敏感性，因而被報社解僱；
- 相關的研究資料多被官方列為機密檔案，導演只能透過訪問林昭身邊的親朋好友，了解林昭的過去；
- 少數當年的右派分子拒絕接受訪問，不願談及文革的史實，以免受到秘密警察的調查；
- 電影中的一段錄像－林昭在牢中的血書和詩作，導演遍尋不獲正本，最後迂迴地只找到複本的複本的複本；
- 被解僱的胡杰出現財政困難，資金不足以進行餘下的拍攝，兼職婚禮攝影師以解決成本問題；
- 一段漫長而艱難的拍攝過程，需要更多的資料搜集，時間和金錢配合。

紀錄片的類型

- 參與型／互動型：電影以訪問的表現形式拍攝，胡杰在戲中充當重要角色，強調與受訪者的互動，參與訪問的部分；
- 闡釋型：導演以旁白表達電影的內容和感受。

迴響

- 崔衛平：「這是一部史詩作品，紀錄英雄的業績，傳唱英雄的故事。」
- 中國人權網：「胡杰的紀錄片成功地利用拍攝角度、視覺元素及音樂，以冷峻的視點，和善感情的手法描繪林昭美麗動人的精神，以及她忠貞的本質。」
- 一般來說，史學家認為這部電影是一個突破，赤裸地揭露真實。較年長的觀眾看畢後非常感動，並感激導演沒有忘記他們在文革時所受到的痛苦。年輕的觀眾亦讚賞有加，他們說電影不但使他們以新的角度去認識國家，而且讓他們反思國家的社會及政治問題。


討論

- 你認為林昭和胡杰兩人為何各自都要冒中國政府之大不韙呢？
- 林昭和胡杰為了他們的理念付出了很大代價，對此你作何評價？
- 關於紀錄重要史事，紀錄片比純文字紀錄的優勝之處是甚麼？