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Resonance and Differences in Spatial Narrative of Eastern and Western Anti-Fascist Literature Based on *Daughters and Sons* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

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Abstract

Anti-fascist literature constructs unique spatial organizations to reflect the profound impact of war on individual destinies and social structures. However, existing studies often limit their scope to a single national context, lacking cross-contextual comparisons. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's and Gabriel Zoran's spatial theories, this paper investigates the spatial narrative mechanisms in Daughters and Sons and For Whom the Bell Tolls. The study reveals that the former re-functionalizes rural daily space and integrates auditory elements to forge a collective identity, whereas the latter compresses the war into mission and psychological spaces to shape individual ethical choices. Through this bidirectional comparison, it argues that this spatial divergence stems from distinct historical conditions and narrative traditions. Ultimately, the resonance in their anti-fascist positions highlights shared humanitarian concerns, while their spatial differences reveal the irreducible richness of war experiences.

I. INTRODUCTION

For a long time, the study of war literature has mainly shown dynamic dominant characteristics. War has changed the geographical pattern of the real world, and has also profoundly affected people's daily life, social relations and spiritual experience. As an important branch of world literature with international radiation and resistance connotations, anti-fascist literature builds a unique spatial organization at the level of record. The movement lines of places and individuals are parallel and intertwined with that of global war. This distinctive geographical narrative reveals the profound impact of war on individual destinies, social structures, the economic base, and the superstructure. As Paul Hirst said, space is not only the "container" of war, nor is it just the abstract coordinate system where conflicts can occur; various situations will shape space in a complex and qualitative way, and the specific characteristics of space in turn constrain and shape war[1]. Therefore, space has become an important entry point for understanding and studying war literature: it not only provides specific conditions for character actions, but also participates in plot organization, character relationship construction and the continuation of historical significance.

However, anti-fascist literature has not been fully discussed in the context of world literature and war literature. Existing research is often limited to a single country category, ignores different experiences other than the main warring countries, and lacks overall observation across contexts[2]. Indeed, when addressing issues of war, resistance, and survival, Chinese and Western resistance literature, despite emerging from distinct historical contexts, exhibit shared commonalities, most notably in their spatial narratives. Set primarily in the rural areas of Hebei, China, *Daughters and Sons* intertwines the people's anti-Japanese struggle with individual growth, and the bonds among the masses with rural social relations. In

doing so, it reveals how war penetrates the space of everyday life and drives transformations in the internal relations of rural society.

For Whom the Bell Tolls, written by Ernest Miller Hemingway, takes the Spanish Civil War as the background. It revolves around Robert Jordan's experience of carrying out the bridge bombing mission. It connects military goals, group collaboration and personal choice through the mountain environment, guerrilla strongholds and bridge operations. Both of these works use specific space to organize resistance actions, presenting different structural centers of gravity in spatial narrative: the former focuses on describing the formation of rural social relations and collective resistance, while the latter takes military tasks as the fulcrum, deeply presenting personal responsibilities and life experience in collective actions. In general, the focus on the performance and deep relationship between individuals and groups in space is the topic that both focus on. The key to examining these two works is to analyze how they organize war actions through space, shape the main body of resistance, and transform specific war experiences into literary narratives. The existing research on *For Whom the Bell Tolls* mainly involves Hemingway's concept of war, ethical thought, characterization and narrative art. In recent years, there have also been studies focusing on the geographical narrative of the work; the relevant research of *Daughters and Sons* focuses on translation dissemination, literary adaptation and character image. Therefore, this article intends to examine the cross-context resonance and differences of the two works in the organization of war space, the formation of collective identity and the expression of individual experience from the perspective of spatial narrative, and further explore the narrative vein of anti-fascist literature expressing war and resistance in different historical contexts.

Henri Lefebvre pointed out that space is social, and its formation and use are always associated with specific social relations. As a result, space transcends the simple geographical category and becomes an important dimension for the development, conflict and reorganization of social relations[3]. That is to say, the significance of war space is reflected not only in the use and change of the geographical environment by military operations, but also in the reorganization of social relations and individual experience. To study the space of war, we should not only stand outside and observe its abstract characteristics, but also recognize the peculiarity and unity of war as a highly organized way of social interaction. The war space is historical and specific[4]. In the analysis of the multiple spaces of war, the strategic ability, economic foundation, historical characteristics and the era of social production are obvious. How to transform daily interaction in rural society into the realistic basis of confrontation space, and how to link common goals with personal choices in the limited military operation space is the key issue of understanding the spatial narrative of the two works. Therefore, the spatial narrative of anti-fascist literature not only shows where the resistance takes place, but also reveals how people in different historical environments establish connections and take responsibility under the restrictions and pressure of war, so that the anti-fascist thought and the connotation of the times of war literature in a period can be glimpsed.

II. WAR SPACE ORGANIZATION FROM RURAL SOCIETY TO MILITARY ACTION

The performance of rural space in literature is not immutable. From the pastoral ideal written by Virgil, to the conversion of people and land to exchangeable property under the feudal system, to the transformation of colonies into "external villages" in the colonial war[5], the meaning of rural space has always changed with historical conditions. During the anti-fascist war, the countryside was no longer a place to be praised, nor just an object of exploitation, but a concrete place for resistance. *Daughters and Sons* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* both place the anti-fascist war in a specific geographical space, but the organizational functions of the space are different.

The former transforms the war from external military events into changes in internal relations and collective actions through the gradual reorganization of rural social space; the latter shrinks the war into a military operation with a clear deadline and goal through the triple organization of observation space, cave strongholds and bridge mission space through mountains. Space is not the static background of war in the two novels, but exists as a geographical entity, which has considerable narrative weight. This article draws on Zoran's distinction between the three levels of narrative space, namely the geological level as a static entity, the space-time level organized by events and actions, and the way the text presents space[6]. It analyzes the spatial organization of the two works in turn, and then reveals the two different "space-action" relationships in comparison.

2.1 War and the Reorganization of Rural Space in *Daughters and Sons*

Lefebvre pointed out that "class struggle is embedded in space"[7]. *Daughters and Sons* put the anti-fascist struggle in the daily life and social relations of the countryside of Jizhong. With the intervention of the war, these daily spaces are gradually connected with the situation of the War of Resistance, and the war thus enters the life

experience that characters can directly perceive and participate in.

The opening of the novel does not directly describe the war, but from the daily life of the village penetrated by external forces. In the first episode, the courtyard of the village office was the public space of Shenjiazhuang. Shen Yaozong, the village head, discussed with the squires whether to "run or stay". The villagers "stood in the yard and listened to the village head and the squires in the north house discussing major events"[8].Space assumes the function of gathering and disseminating information here, but does not provide the conditions for action: the villagers can only "listen" and watch with "people's panic". The village office has completed the function of information transmission, but it does not have the organizational conditions to transform information into collective action. Similarly, the three of Shui Daniu were planting wheat in the rented wheat field. The fugitive crowd passed by the road and sighed, "Oh, when is this? You still plant wheat!"[8] In this scene, the production space and the escape space are juxtased, and the action of Shui Daniu "standing up and straightening up" is the expression of cognitive interruption. The wheat field under his feet asked him to continue farming, but the fugitive crowd on the road in front of him announced that this daily order had failed. When discussing the "space-time level" of narrative space, Zoran pointed out that space is organized by events and movements, and the movement and pauses of characters themselves redeline the meaning of space[9]. The behavior of "standing" and "standing up straight" is the moment when the daily production space is interrupted by the war movement.

It can be seen that war does not first enter the countryside in the form of battle, but enters in the way that daily space is penetrated by external space. The reorganization of rural space will not really begin until the anti-Japanese forces re-functionalize the daily space.

The reorganization of the rural space in the novel is first accomplished by transforming the daily space into an organizational space. Cai and Shui carried the fish basket out of the village. They pretended to be small businessmen to catch up and entered the village. They went to Hexi Village to pick up the pile of firewood, revealing two sacks of grenades, filling four fish baskets[8]. In this plot, the physical form of the woodshed has not changed, but the function has changed from storing firewood to hiding weapons. The hidden space of the fishbox makes it possible for weapons to enter the village from outside. This is not a combat space, but an organizational space. Weapons are not used to fire on the spot, but are stored and distributed to the equipment list of the Self-Defense Forces for use.

The abandoned school is a more complete example of the re-functionalization of space. After the incident, there was no one in the school. Liu Shuangxi "had dug two pits" in the faculty room, where the Self-Defense Forces held meetings, swore and hid guns[8]. The educational space was recharacterized as an organizational space, and the scattered peasants were incorporated into the Self-Defense Forces. The change of spatial function directly brings changes in the daily behavior of the characters. The re-functionalization of the school has turned the scattered individual farmers into organized collectives.

Lefebvre called this activity of changing the use of space "space practice". He emphasized that space is the product of social relations[7]. The physical space of the woodshed and the school has not changed, but the rules of use have changed, and so have the social relations. The rural space will not automatically become a resistance space. It needs to be consciously reorganized. The way of organization is not to fight, but to change the way of using space.

However, the functional transformation of space was not always successful. When the guerrillas first attacked Dongliu Village, the team only scattered and searched, and there was no clear division of labor. As a result, their own people fought their own people, and Gao Tuner injured Cui Yanlu's leg with one shot[8]. The dispersion of the field does not provide organizational conditions, and the scope of movement and contact methods of the team are not specified, which in turn amplifies the chaos in the space. This shows that the rural space will not automatically become a combat space, and it needs to be consciously organized. In the embankment ambush battle of May wheat harvest, the guerrillas hid under the shade of willows on the embankment slope. The old platoon leader arranged sections and sent people to guard. The embankment provided cover, and the river compressed the enemy to a limited firing surface[8]. At this time, the space became the most powerful helper. In the same village, the former is disorderly and the latter is orderly. The difference is whether the space is included in the action plan.

The militarization of rural space is not the inherent nature of space, but the result of whether the actors learn to organize space. The spatial organization logic of *Daughters and Sons* is from diffusion to reorganization. The war penetrates the daily space from the outside, the anti-Japanese forces organize resistance through the re-functionalization of daily space, and the degree of reorganization of space directly determines the effectiveness of the action.

2.2 Mountains, Bridges, and Strongholds as Mission Space

in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

If the rural space of *Daughters and Sons* carries the gradual reorganization of farmers' daily life and social interaction, then the space of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* has been defined by military missions and enemy power from the beginning. The mountain terrian, the direction of the highway, the span of the bridge, and the location of the sentry are not neutral geographical facts, but the conditions that determine the possibility of action. Space provides both cover and restrictions. To analyze the spatial organization of this novel, it is necessary to examine how the terrain and tasks jointly determine the action conditions of the characters, and how space contracts the war into a centralized military decision.

The mountains in the novel are not the neutral natural northern background, but the material premise of the guerrilla action. At the beginning of the chapter, Jordan looks down on the road on the hillside covered with pine forests. The pine forest space not only provides a place for the novel characters to move and becomes the background of the story, but also an idyllical world with metaphorical characteristics, which is in great contrast to the violent, chaotic and irrational war world outside the pine forest[10]. Anselmo took him over mountains, bypass streams, and climb the platform. This walk itself shows that in this mountain, action means continuous adaptation to the terrain. Ridges, canyons, rock walls and pine forests not only provide the possibility of concealment, but also stipulate the path to the target.

The mountainous space first forms a kind of shelter. The stronghold is in the cave under the rock wall at the end of the valley. "Nothing would show from above. It was as well hidden as a bear's den"[11], and it is difficult to find from the air, which makes it possible for a team with few people and poor equipment to exist behind the enemy for a long time. Shelter also means restrictions. Traffic in the mountains is extremely limited. Jordan repeatedly emphasized that the explosives must be hidden within half an hour after blowing up the bridge, because there are only a handful of paths to go; Pablo and the deaf man will leave traces once the snow stops and be tracked by the enemy, and the conditions of the snow season have become a medium of exposure. At the same time, the mountains are both a support and a concentration of enemy's firepower. The mountains cannot provide in-depth defense, so they can only hide temporarily. The deaf people and horses are finally trapped on the top of a mountain "like a chancre"[11], and the shelter quickly fails in front of the dominant firepower.

Therefore, mountain space has both shelter and restriction: it is not a symbol of freedom and safety, nor a simple obstacle, but a material condition that forces people to constantly calculate trade-offs. It is this duality that makes every action of the guerrillas uncertain and costly, and also allows the war to gain a perceptible form in the specific terrain.

The novel adopts the spatial narrative organization plot of "orange-petal" structure. As the core space, the bridge establishes different connections with the space where the protagonist, the guerrillas and the enemy are located through the different veins[12].

The vein of the protagonist Jordan is "from top to bottom". He came down from the hillside observation point and approached the bridge through the pine forest and canyon. For him, the space meant a gradually shrinking working surface - when observing, he could still see the whole picture of the bridge. When loading, only a few feet of the bridge frame was left. Above the head was the highway, and the foot was a torrent[11]. The closer he got to the bridge, the narrower his vision became. All he could rely on was the movements of his hands and the explosives handed over by his companions.

The vein of the guerrillas is "from the outside to the inside". The people of Pablo gathered from the cave and the horse farm to the bridge, each guarding a section of the highway and a sentry. Space means different division of labor and invisible cooperation for them: Pilar is on this end and Pablo is on the other end. No one knows the situation of the other party, and can only keep a section according to the pre-agreed agreement[11]. The bridge obstructed their vision, but tied their actions together.

The vein of the enemy is to "advance along the road". The bridge is the throat through which sentries, cavalry and tanks must pass. As soon as the tank shows its head, it was beaten back by Jordan[11].

The three veins are not interconnected, but they are twisted to the same point in time by the medium of the bridge. As the core space, the bridge allows different experiences to meet at the same time, which is the opposite of the organization of villages in *Daughters and Sons* that spread out by network.

Long Diyong pointed out, "The so-called story space is the kind of 'physical space' written in narrative works, which is actually the place or place where the event takes place.[13]" This kind of story space not only provides a specific place for character activities and plot development, but also creates different atmospheres through the conversion of different spaces, thus guiding readers' psychological expectations[14].The closed nature of the cave stronghold space also amplifies the dependence and contradictions between guerrilla members.

The hole is only that big. The bed is next to the bed, and the pot stove is next to the pot stove. No one can deal with anyone, and there is nowhere to hide. After Pablo was disappointed, he still ate, drank and talked with Jordan and others in the same hole. His alertness and hostility were infinitely amplified by the small space, and Pilar and Agustín's suspicion of him became more and more unconceable[11].

The limited space can't let go of each other. Jordan found that everyone had to do the work in the cave, and whoever picked it would directly affect others. That's why he couldn't leave even if he was wary of Pablo[11]. Space forces people to rely on each other and tolerate each other.

What really pushes these dependences and contradictions to the outbreak is the deadline of the task. The time to blow up the bridge is set before the attack, and the operation area is limited to between mountains and roads, and there are fewer and fewer places to detour. Pablo's theft, Pilar's seizure of power, and people's statements all happened under the circumstances of "a few days". When the time is tight and the space is narrow, people can only choose between military goals, group responsibilities and personal situations on the spot.

Therefore, the closure of the stronghold and the deadline of the task are a common effect. Space does not leave a way out, time does not leave room for people, and the plot is pushed forward.

2.3 A Comparison of War Space Organization in the Two Works

Both works use space to organize actions, but the way of organization is different. The space of *Daughters and Sons* is relational, and the functions of villages, schools, embankments and reed ponds depend on how the relationship between the characters is reorganized; while the space of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is task-specific, and the functions of mountains, bridges and caves It depends on their position in a military operation.

This difference is also a difference in the way of narrative organization. The former uses the chapter body to continuously spread, and the transformation of space serves the progress of the plot; while the latter uses a three-day time frame, and the transformation of space serves the concentration of action. As a result, the two works present different war narrative scales: *Daughters and Sons* takes rural changes as the scale, and war is the process of reorganization of village internal relations; *For Whom the Bell Tolls* takes the execution of a military mission as the measure, War is the process of cooperation, judgment and risk inheritance of characters in a limited time and space.

III. SUBJECT FORMATION IN THE SPACE OF WAR

Space is not merely a physical backdrop but a crucial field for subject formation. In the narratives of resistance literature, the space of war profoundly shapes characters' collective identities and individual choices. Focusing on *Daughters and Sons* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, both works demonstrate how war reconstructs rural social relations and temporary communities. By analyzing the characters' practices of resistance within these spaces, this chapter explores how collective and individual subjects are generated upon different foundations. Comparing these two paths of formation helps to deepen our understanding of the mechanisms of subject formation within the space of war.

3.1 Rural Social Relations and the Formation of Collective Subjectivity in *Daughters and Sons*

In Heidegger's view, the essential state of a person is first of all "homelessness"(Unheimlichkeit)[15]. The essence and existence of human beings are stuck with others and cannot be cut off. The spatial attributes of people are stipulated by the relationship between people and the larger realm of existence. Ethnic groups, hometowns and countries are all specific ways of living and historical development[16]. Hence, the dependence between people and hometown is like the dependence of irrigating the soil with blood and nourishing the blood with the soil, and the spatial attributes of people and the space itself also change and develop synchronously. The growth of the characters in *Daughters and Sons* is closely related to the process of the gradual invasion of the rural space in the central region of Hebei Province during the War of Resistance. Niu Dashui, Yang Xiaomei and other characters were originally in the countryside of family life, livelihood activities and local social relations. With the development of the war situation, the performance of the characters' growth in the novel has become increasingly linked to the expansion of their scope of action: the characters gradually changed from participants in daily life affairs to the need to bear public responsible anti-war actors. Niu Dashui's first attempt to lead his men in capturing plainclothes collaborators ended in failure—he even accidentally wounded one of his own. The participants were consequently consumed with frustration. Faced with this setback, Blackie Cai encouraged them with the saying: "A man is tempered in the world, just as a knife is honed on the stone."[8]. Thus, it can be seen that acts of resistance place the characters within new relationships of responsibility: action is no longer merely an expression of individual will, but also involves the safety of one's comrades and the success or failure of collective action. Niu Dashui's mistakes exposed his lack of experience, and

also made him have to face the consequences of his actions, accept other people's opinions and accumulate experience from practice. The growth of characters has a specific process, and the sense of responsibility is gradually formed in action and its feedback. Yang Xiaomei's experience shows another kind of ability to act. In the fourteenth episode of the novel, she led the people to sing and advised the pseudo-army to give up the attachment of the enemy forces[8]. Singing has become a public expression that connects different groups here. Yang Xiaomei's actions went beyond the scope of personal life and acquaintances, and entered into more complex social relations. The pseudo-military chose to surrender after Yang Xiaomei's persuasion and the singing of the crowd. Here, sound and hearing are actually involved in space. Although the characteristics of sound diffusion make it difficult to form a geometric spatial structure, it is connected with memory and emotion, transforming the military confrontation space of the guard tower into a place for political mobilization[17] and awakening the *topophilia* (the emotional bond to place) of the puppet troops, highlighting the complex emotional bonds between individuals and their native land during the war. Compared with Niu Dashui's accumulated experience after the action was frustrated, Yang Xiaomei's influence on others through organization, expression and persuasion shows that the character's participation in the war of resistance is not a single way. The two action clues together show that the growth experience of the character's ability is reflected in the changes in the way he or she intervenes in public affairs and the scope of his influence.

Human actions and experiences have also changed the actual function of rural space. Through human experience, space becomes valuable and temporal, and gradually becomes a meaningful place. The physical space in literary narrative is not only presented through scenes and objects, but also through character activities and events; social space is composed of interpersonal relationships and their social factors[18]. The countryside in the novel serves both as a living environment where the characters sustain their livelihoods and conduct daily interactions, and as a concrete site where resistance actions unfold, conflicts between differing positions arise, and public relations are formed. Niu Dashui leading his team in action, and Yang Xiaomei organizing the villagers to persuade the puppet troops, both endow the pre-existing rural space with new contents of action. The characters move towards public affairs in a familiar living environment, and the countryside gradually becomes a space for organizing resistance, coordinating relationships and assuming common responsibilities in these actions. The expansion of the scope of action of the characters has entered into broader rural social relations, and also provided a foundation for the formation of rural public life and community identity. And the place enters the world shared by the community from private experience, not only because it witnesses individual changes, but also because it carries the collective imagination of identity, emotion and history.

3.2 Guerrilla Community and Individual Ethical Choices in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

Set against the three-day timeframe of Robert Jordan's bridge-demolition mission, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* brings together guerrilla fighters from diverse backgrounds into a shared military operation. In the novel, the cave functions not merely as a stronghold where the guerrillas rest, deliberate, and live, but also as a site that bears witness to various conflicts and contradictions. The varying personalities and objectives of the individuals forge distinct stances for action within the group. Although the band is temporarily united by a common mission, their levels of trust and senses of responsibility rarely align. Pablo's transformation, in particular, exposes the tension between the collective objective and personal interests. Once a valiant fighter, he has gradually lost his revolutionary resolve due to fear and an addiction to alcohol. Upon arriving at the camp, Jordan must simultaneously advance the mission, assess whether Pablo is trustworthy, and safeguard the explosives from sabotage. The relative confinement of the cave compels the members to share information, supplies, and operational risks, making it impossible for them to conceal their true personalities and stances.

Henri Lefebvre points out in *Space and Politics* that the capitalist system dominates social mobility through spatial arrangements, subjecting workers' actions and future plans to the constraints of the established spatial order. As the quotation goes, "The working class, strategically and in terms of future prospects, is always allocated in space according to other flows and the constraints of those networks (the delivery of raw materials and energy—the sale of finished or unfinished products).[19]" In other words, there is a close connection between the organization of space, the circulation of materials, and human movement. While human experience activates the meaning of place and the production of space, order, law, power, and political institutions also control the coordinated operation of people and space. The cave serves both as a place where members gather and hide from the enemy, and as a stronghold where human activities, material management, and military operations unfold. Unwritten rules such as taking turns on sentry duty and material management incorporate the cave space into a limited temporal order, extending spatial organization into

the coordination and constraint of daily life. However, discipline itself is actually fragile and unstable, which to some extent leads to internal power conflicts and a lack of unity among members. The cave thus not only exhibits the organizational function necessary to sustain collective action but also exposes the coordination dilemmas within this community. Mediated by order, the survival of each guerrilla individual is deeply bound to the networks of flow. Yet, cooperation is constantly negotiated amid differences: Jordan relies on Anselmo for intelligence, uses Pilar to mediate relations, and must remain alert to the potential risks posed by Pablo. The community thus presents itself as a relational structure that must be maintained through concrete actions; its stability depends on whether members can establish a minimum level of cooperation across different interests and judgments.

In contrast to Pablo's retreat from operational risks, Jordan's subjective consciousness is primarily manifested through his judgments and actions in advancing the mission. In an order built upon the aggregation of grassroots laborers, Jordan is not a leader possessing absolute authority; relationships within the group, members' attitudes, and operational conditions can all affect the execution of the task. Therefore, Jordan must constantly make judgments under conditions of limited information and unstable internal and external cooperative relationships. The bridge-demolition operation not only tests his military capabilities but also requires him to link individual choices with the safety of the group. In Jordan, the psychological space of war manifests as the dynamic fluctuations of subjective consciousness. He needs to rely on the guerrillas to complete the mission and must also accept the autonomous will of his collaborators and the risks it may bring. Agency for action is thus embodied as the capacity to make choices within limitations and to bear the consequences of those choices. In the ongoing process of coping with uncertainty, Jordan gradually affirms his responsibility for the mission and for others. The manifestation of subjectivity in the space of war therefore stems both from proactive action and from the consciousness and practice of bearing the consequences of action.

Furthermore, Jordan and Maria's romance introduces a dimension of private life into the military mission. Their meeting means that Jordan's actions are no longer solely centered on the bridge-demolition task; the intimate relationship also prompts him to re-examine the relationship between personal happiness and wartime responsibility. At the end of the novel, Jordan is injured during the retreat but still chooses to stay behind to cover his comrades' withdrawal. This decision concentrates personal emotion, collective responsibility, and the choice of fate into a single scene. At this moment, Jordan's action entails both a sense of responsibility toward his comrades and an irreconcilable conflict with his love for Maria: he wants Maria to survive but cannot leave together with her. The tense, thrilling, and cruel nature of the war space amplifies emotional needs between individuals, yet prevents private desires and collective action from being easily reconciled, thereby causing the characters' ethical choices to reveal their true costs. Through Jordan's emotional and military experiences in war, the novel reveals that individuals within the resistance community do not disappear into collective goals; the space of war witnesses complex individual growth and painful choices, and personal emotions, judgments, and sacrifices constitute the ethical implications of collective action.

3.3 A Comparative Study of Collective and Individual Subjects in the Two Works

Although *Daughters and Sons* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* both established wartime collective relations in the war space, the formation path of this community is not the same. *Daughters and Sons* is based on the countryside of Hebei Province. The characters have established friendly social relations before the war. Because China's rural society has been in a self-sufficient agricultural society for a long time, the family is the basic living unit in the countryside, which is a typical "acquaintance society" operation mode[20]. In *Daughters and Sons*, multiple characters are connected through Blackie Cai into a kinship network linked by marriage. Among them, Niu Dashui, Yang Xiaomei, and Blackie Cai are relatives, while Zhang Jinlong is Yang Xiaomei's ex-husband. The clan-based settlement structure, on the one hand, closely intertwines blood ties and marriage ties, forming an acquaintance network characterized by "double kinship" (kin upon kin); on the other hand, it fosters a relatively open public space with a compact layout within the *countryside*. These two aspects complement each other, constituting a typical characteristic of Chinese countrysides. Consequently, in the face of war, the characters in the novel gradually formed collective objectives through their practices of resistance.The countryside is not only a place where people lived before the war, but also a social space and war space for organizing forces, transmitting information and consolidating identity due to the anti-Japanese action. Social relations as a whole show a healthy development. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the guerrilla members hail from various towns in the Guadarrama Mountains, and the war forces them to gather in a makeshift stronghold—the cave. Compared with the former, the social ties underpinning the mission in this novel appear thin and alienated; the forced "cohesion" of being concentrated in a confined space

instead produces negative effects, provoking contradictions and conflicts. However, both works show that the common goal will not actively kill the existence of individual differences. *Daughters and Sons* mainly shows the connection between personal relationships and collective actions through the process of characters' participation in the War of Resistance. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Jordan must deal with Pablo's resistance and the crisis of trust within the team while advancing the task. The community lacks a pre-finished foundation, but a structure of relations gradually formed in cooperation, disagreement and choice of action.

In *Daughters and Sons*, Kung Chueh and Yuan Ching skillfully synchronize the narration of the characters' social growth with rural collective action, thereby naturally and ingeniously integrating individual experiences into the historical trajectory of the national resistance war. As the characters participate in the resistance, navigate rural relations, and undertake shared tasks, they constantly adjust and transform their own circumstances, and their growth is interconnected with the development of rural resistance forces. For *Whom the Bell Tolls* is likewise driven by a clear military mission, yet it persistently foregrounds Jordan's private emotions, his complex psychology of decision-making, and his attitude toward death. The two works differ in their narrative focus: *Daughters and Sons* is more concerned with how individuals acquire a new social position within the new wartime space through participation in collective action, whereas *For Whom the Bell Tolls* draws readers, in a compelling manner, into the wartime and psychological spaces where Jordan makes his life-and-death judgments: when life and death, duty, and personal happiness come into conflict, how exactly does the character choose?

IV. LITERARY EXPRESSION AND HISTORICAL LIMITS OF SPATIAL NARRATIVE

The historical expression of war literature often relies on the organization of space rather than merely the sequence of time. In *Daughters and Sons* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the narrative unfolds through specific spatial frameworks: the former is rooted in rural social relations, while the latter is condensed into a mission space. This spatial structure not only organizes the historical experience of the war but also generates the respective anti-fascist meanings. Analyzing these spatial forms and historical limits helps reveal the multidimensional nature of anti-fascist literature.

4.1 Spatial Experience and the Organization of War Narratives

The presentation of history in war literature depends not only on which events are described, but also on how the narrative vein between these events is born. In this process, space participates in the establishment of the historical scale, so that the originally scattered experiences are connected, and which changes can be the main clues to understand war. Wars of different cultures, eras and regions have different characteristics. In war literature, the spatial dimension of war must be understood in combination with the specific environment, technical conditions, social organization mode and local people's perception of space. When experience is brought back to geographical research, space becomes a world of meaning that is constantly generated after the interaction between man and the environment.

The narrative of *Daughters and Sons* is based on the countryside in northern China, and its historical vision begins with local social relations and local experience. The history of the War of Resistance in the novel has a distinct geographical support. The countryside not only provides a specific environment for the characters' experiences, but also builds a narrative scale that connects local life and ethnic crises. The whole novel mainly tells the story of the peasants in Baiyangdian, who resisted the Japanese pseudo-forces under the leadership of the Communist Party of China in the early days of the War of Resistance. This narrative main line reminds us that the narrative focus of the novel is not only to "record" war events, but also to show the historical process of how local society enters the national war of resistance, which is also a typical feature of many anti-war works in China. From the perspective of the narrative structure, local experience has given the original macro history a concrete form of sustainable tracking. In the space of Baiyangdian, we can see the universality and peculiarity of the impact of the Anti-Japanese War on various parts of China. Readers' understanding of the process of war is based on a continuous understanding of the changes in local life. Therefore, the historical narrative of the work has a structure that extends from the direction of the earth as a whole.

For Whom the Bell Tolls puts the task of blowing up the bridge in the center of the narrative and organizes the character's experience with limited action time. The novel presents the tension of war around a task: military goals, operational conditions and individual sacrifices together constitute the main basis for readers to understand the Spanish Civil War. Compared with the narrative that unfolds along local social changes, the bridge bombing mission compresses history into a limited time and scope of action, so that the war can be more concentrated through a specific event. Mountains, bridges, caves,

guerrilla camps and other spaces connect the routes of mission practice. Through Jordan's observation and inspection, the guerrillas in this limited space have become the epitome of the whole Spanish society[21].The identity and mission spirit of Jordan's republican warrior stimulated the breadtness of this limited space——although the identity and complex character of the outsider caused him to have a lot of conflicts with other members of the guerrillas, it is also because of Jordan's special nature that readers follow his perspective to understand the difficult process of individual integration into the group. Against the war, it also witnessed the reconstruction of families, beliefs and ethnic communities in the war space. Only by recognizing the different roles and dialectical relationships between communities and individuals in the anti-fascist war can people further strengthen their yearning, pursuit and defense of peace[22].

4.2 Spatial Form and the Generation of Anti-Fascist Meaning

Daughters and Sons constructs its overarching narrative of the War of Resistance through the experiences of multiple characters. Their actions, speech, and everyday interactions continually feed into the broader transformation of rural society, and gradually coalesce into a collective within the space of war. The songs, folk ballads, proverbs, and local idioms that recur throughout the work—a considerable portion of them bound up with anti-Japanese activity and revolutionary propaganda—also participate in the formation of this collective narrative. Examples include "When the cannon roars, tears fill the eyes"[8] , "The stars follow the moon; the common people follow the Communist Party" [8], and "When the guns sound, the brutal enemy comes to attack"[8]. In the plot itself, the self-defense militia sing the "March of the Volunteers"[40]; during the night raid on the road they sing "The paired moons rise above the treetops"[8] ; and the crowd surrounding the blockhouse sings "People take the road of life! Do not be a Japanese dog!" [8]. Proverbs such as "People are tempered in the world; knives are sharpened on stone"[8] and "A cart ahead leaves ruts for those behind" [8] likewise appear. These voices not only display the artistic and communicative character of Chinese rural music but also carry the lived experience and emotional expression of a particular region, giving the characters' voices a distinct socio-cultural imprint. It can thus be seen that the characters' voices in this novel exceed the range of individual emotion and become part of the shared experience of rural society. The geographical environment not only serves as the material basis of human existence but also acts upon the formation of human spirit and consciousness. In the Hebei region the terrain is low and flat, with numerous lakes, ponds, ditches, and reed fields distributed throughout; villages are small in scale, and houses and courtyards are joined one to another. This northern village during the War of Resistance has a clear acoustic presence: the sounds of water and of human voices intertwine, and the whole countryside is a sound-world connected by natural soundscapes, animal barking, and the murmur of human speech. The distinctive sound-geographical environment of the novel opens up a space in which characters can listen in every direction; it both nourishes the villagers' pure auditory memory and their agile natural perception, and, through its primordial experience, becomes an irreproducible source and resource for the author's literary practice[23]. The anti-fascist significance likewise acquires a social foundation in this polyphonic narration: resistance action is linked to ordinary people's lived feelings, cultural memory, and shared aspirations.

For Whom the Bell Tolls runs through the narrative with the task of blowing up the bridge. At the same time, with the help of Jordan's inner monologue and self-dialogue, external military operations are transformed into individual spiritual experience. The war space and psychological space in the novel are always interconnected: the former constitutes the actual environment where military operations take place, stipulating the action conditions and survival situation of the characters; the latter gives personal meaning to these external environments through the perception, judgment and emotional experience of the characters, so that the war space is further presented as the inner characters. Spiritual experience. When talking about Kashikin, Jordan, on the one hand, acknowledged the bravery and explosive ability of the other party, and on the other hand, repeatedly considered the impact that his mental state might have on the task, and even repeated in his heart that "they should transfer him back" [11]. This repeated reflection shows Jordan's trade-off between military judgment and life consciousness, and also shows how the pressure of action in the war space enters the character consciousness and transforms into continuous ethical thinking. As the mission progressed, Jordan's observation of the fate of others gradually reflected his own situation, and his personal emotions, political beliefs and consciousness of death also entered the same narrative process. Through the alternation of external actions and inner activities, the novel presents the experience of war as the spiritual journey of individuals who constantly examine their own responsibilities, beliefs and the price of life, and further reveals the ethical weight contained in anti-fascist actions.

The narrative form of the two works has formed different meanings. Through group portraits of characters, folk language and collective expression in space,

Daughters and Sons makes resistance action a common practice that can continue in social life; while Hemingway's description of Jordan's psychological space with a lot of pen and ink in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* intertwine military tasks and individual consciousness. The meaning of resistance is reflected in the judgment, choice and cost of life of the actor. The former emphasizes how common experience can be expressed and social recognition, while the latter highlights how individuals can take on the risks contained in collective goals in specific actions. The two narratives jointly expand the ethical expression of anti-fascist literature: resistance includes not only resistance to aggression, but also the maintenance and sense of mission for the lives of ordinary people, individual lives and collective futures.

4.3 Limits of Resonance and Sources of Differences in Historical and Literary Contexts

Both works allow space to assume the function of organizing war, rather than simply writing war as an abstract historical background. In *Daughters and Sons*, villages, embankments and reed ponds were reorganized with the mobilization of the War of Resistance; in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, mountains, caves and bridges were gradually tightened with the deadline of the bridge mission. This space is different, but it brings the same effect: they all implement the resistance action on specific geographical and social conditions, making cooperation, risk and sacrifice a visible process. This kind of comparability is not accidental. In April 1932, Mao Zedong, Chairman of the Provisional Central Government of the Chinese Soviet Union, officially proposed a "direct war against Japan" and called for "unity with the oppressed proletarian and the Soviet Union in the world to achieve the national revolutionary war to expel Japanese imperialism from China, oppose imperialism to divide China, and thoroughly fight for the Republic of China. The true independence and liberation of the ethnic group." Against this background, the anti-Japanese national united front continued to be consolidated, and the political alliance became more and more extensive. The Spanish Communist Party once called the Communist Party of China and said that China's struggle against Japanese imperialism was "our struggle". The Executive Committee of the Communist International defined the Chinese War of Resistance and the Spanish Civil War as "the national liberation war against foreign invaders" and regarded them as two battlefields of the same struggle[24]. The two works face different battlefields of the same world anti-fascist struggle, and the spatial narrative resonance is based on this historical connection.

The difference in spatial narrative between the two first comes from the difference in historical conditions. *Daughters and Sons* is written in the base of the enemy rear in North China. Kung Chueh and Yuan Ching went deep into Baiyangdian to experience life, based on real people such as "Yanling Team" and Ma Shufang, director of the Women's Federation[25]. The novel relies on reality, focuses on the inner world of ordinary people under the war, and organizes the narrative with the countryside as the unit and the changes in social relations as the measure.

For Whom the Bell Tolls is different. Hemingway went to Spain as a war reporter in 1937. Jordan in the novel was a member of the international column. Under the oppression of fascist countries, leftists from all over the world set up an international column at the call of the Soviet Union. Their relationship with Spain was alienated and task-like[26]. But this does not mean that "the East is heavy on the collective and the West is heavy on the individual". The identity relationship of the former is gradually strengthened in rural relations, and the personal responsibility of the latter is forced to be generated in collective tasks. Both are generated under their respective historical contexts and narrative goals, rather than simply the projection of cultural character.

Daughters and Sons and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* have a clear resonance on the anti-fascist theme, but this resonance cannot erase the difference. The course of the war of resistance in rural society and the personal situation in military missions are two historical experiences that cannot be replaced. The creations of Kung Chueh and Yuan Ching are rooted in the specific people and events of the base in Jizhong, while Hemingway's creation comes from his observation and imagination of the international column guerrilla warfare as a field reporter. Every literary work is written in a specific language, so first of all, it is a work in a certain language and cultural tradition[27].The meaning of comparison is not to attribute the two to a unified mode, but to show how different literary forms take on the responsibility of expressing different war experiences, and the richness of anti-fascist literature lies in this irreducible difference.

V. CONCLUSION

Reflecting on the space of war enables us to envision more than merely blood-soaked scenes of violence when we discuss war. Through recording, rewriting, and creating, war literature immortalizes the souls buried beneath the earth alongside the great spirit and will forged in wartime. Consequently, analyzing the space within war literature is to explore the resting place of these souls and the eternal temple of the enduring spirit. This article takes spatial narrative as the starting point and compares how the two works transform the anti-fascist war into literary

expressions about social organization, collective identity and individual choice. *Daughters and Sons* takes the changes in rural social relations as the scale, the space is gradually reorganized with the mobilization of the War of Resistance, and the growth of characters is synchronized with the expansion of rural life; *For Whom the Bell Tolls* takes a military mission as the measure, distributing information in the mountains, compressing group relations in caves, and tightening the action time of bridges. Jordan's sense of responsibility is It is forced to be generated under the condition of incomplete information and unstable cooperation. The former uses space to develop social relations, and the latter uses space to compress action time. However, both works show that the formation of the resistance subject is always related to specific spatial conditions and action processes, and the common goal will not automatically erase individual differences.

This article does not attribute the difference between the two works to the cultural dual division of "the East focuses on the collective and the West focuses on the individual", but interprets it in combination with the different historical conditions, creative context and narrative tradition of the Chinese War of Resistance and the Spanish War. The resonance of the anti-fascist position of *Daughters and Sons* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* does not represent the elimination of their differences in spatial organization, subject shaping and war experience expression. The meaning of the comparison between the two is to show how different literary forms take on the task of expressing war experience, so that every war and every specific person can be understood in an appropriate spatial form.

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