

The Comedy Narrative of Contemporary Family Drama and Its Motivation Analysis

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Abstract—The comedy narrative is a third narrative style of Chinese family dramas, in addition to the narrative of misery and the narrative of daily life. It combines the beauty and romance of daily life, and comforts the audience facing the pressure of life. There are two aspects of the social and cultural motivation of the comedy narrative of family drama. One is the influence of the comedy spirit based on the traditional aesthetic psychology of the Chinese nation on the time dimension, and the other is the influence of the entertainment spirit based on the popular culture on the spatial dimension. The comedy narrative of family dramas combines popular culture and entertaining culture, realizing the social value of artistic works to enlighten thoughts, warm the soul and cultivate life.

Keywords—family drama; comedy narrative; entertaining culture; popular culture

I. INTRODUCTION

With the progress of Chinese society, family dramas with family life as the object of description have also developed, constantly cultivating new styles and narrative forms. Family dramas such as "Eager", "Fence, Woman and Dog" show a suffering narrative because of the infiltration of tragic consciousness; family dramas such as "The Happiness of the Eldest" and "The Beautiful Times of the Daughter-in-law" jump out of the framework of historical narrative, limiting the narrative attention within the family, and highlighting the narrative features of the family drama in daily life. After the "Big Husband" and "Little Husband", the family drama is also integrated into the "popular comedy" era of entertainment, and the tendency of comedy narrative is becoming more and more obvious. The appearance of "Home in Distance", "Happy Family" and "Unbeatable You" has made the comedy narrative of family dramas rise into a narrative style coexisting with the narrative of suffering and the narrative of daily life.

II. COMEDY NARRATIVE: COMEDY INTEGRATION IN FAMILY DRAMA

In the popular culture, the concept of "entertainment to death" has infiltrated into the contemporary society where people live. The comedy this paper talking about is more about "comedy in the category of aesthetics". It refers to every aesthetic phenomenon which makes people laughing

that exists in real life and works of art. [1] People often refer to the comedy in the aesthetic category as comedy. In other words, all the real life and art works that can make people laugh and have a joy are aesthetic comedies. This is what people talk about the logical starting point of "pan-comedy" and "comic narrative". The comedy narrative is a creative technique in which a large number of family dramas absorb comedy. The use of comedy elements makes the family drama come a layer of comedy because of the comical enhancement. The comedy narrative is the representation of the aesthetic trend of the era of "pan-comedy" in the family drama, and it is also the result of the active integration of family drama creation into comedy. When audiences watch such family dramas, they laugh more than tears, they get more entertainment than thinking, and they feel more relaxed than heavy.

III. SADNESS AND JOY: THE COMEDIC NARRATIVE FEATURES OF FAMILY DRAMA

The comedy narrative of family drama is a continuation of the folk narrative in the literary tradition of our country. It focuses on the daily life of ordinary people, artistically uses clever and other narrative techniques, exaggerates, transplants and transforms the smiles of ordinary people in daily life. Handling various contradictions in a comedic way, presenting a kind of family life full of kindness and harmony, is a kind of satirical satire on the contradictions of various family lives in real life, and also emphasizes the significance of traditional virtues and spirits such as "goodness" and "harmony" in modern family life with artistic methods.

A. Coincidence to Create a Comedy Situation

The basic requirement of coincidence is "conformation", which means that the occurrence of an event must be reasonable, conform to the logic of daily life, and be the basis for the real realization of art; "Being opportune" is the embodiment of the creator's layout and details. Although coincidence is widely present in various narratives, coincidence and comedy have a close relationship and are an important means of realizing comedy narrative. Hegel said that "accidental accidents lead to the intricate transformation of the situation... The inner character and external situation have both become comedy contradictions and lead to a

comical solution." [2] Li Yu said in the "Sketches of Idle Pleasure" that "where there is not strangeness, there will be no legend; where there is no coincidence, there will be no strangeness." Coincidence is an accidental accident. In essence, the composition of coincidence requires three conditions: the first is that there is a connection between two things or events; the second is that the connection is accidental, and there is no causal constraint; and the third is that the connection itself has its own characteristics and has a certain narrative function. Coincidence in family dramas usually includes the coincidence of character relationships and the coincidence of plots.

The coincidence of character relationships exists in the macroscopic layout of TV dramas, which promotes the internal roots of conflicts to intensify or alleviate. The setting of coincidence at the level of character relationship is not only a widely used method of ancient and modern Chinese and foreign narratives, but has become an important method for weaving family characters. In the "Home in Distance", Song Fei and Guo Yanan have mutual affection, while Guo Yanan's mother and Song Fei's mother are childhood friends; "Happy Family" arranges the birthday of Fang Tianxin's father and the company's chairman's birthday in one day. The relationship between the characters created by coincidence greatly enhances the comedy of the story.

B. The Coincidence of the Plot

If the coincidence of the relationship between the characters mainly affects the intensification or relaxation of contradictions, then the coincidence of the plot directly promotes the creation of the comedy situation, making the specific scene more interesting. The plot coincidence can be divided into two categories: diachronic coincidence and synchronic coincidence. Yang Guang, in "Unbeatable You", when he picked up Liu Ai, he has seen Liu Ai and her own father pulling together. Liu Guang, who was unclear with this condition, rushed up and punched his unseen father-in-law. In the fourth episode of "Happy Family", Fang Tianxin kissed Wang Shuo under the impulse of drunkenness in order to prove her and the chairman's innocence. Her father who happened to be out of the house saw that this was a synchronic coincidence. In the "Home in Distance", the tricycle, which Song Mingmei wanted to take a ride, belonged to Fu Boheng. The object she encountered on the blind date program was also Fu Boheng. Later, she found that her son's landlord was also Fu Boheng, which was a diachronic coincidence.

C. Buffoonery to Create a Comedy Atmosphere

As a continuation and inheritance of Chinese traditional folk narratives and legendary narratives in the field of film and television narrative, family dramas have been transplanted across the media and across the era in comic language and comedic movements. The work of "Home in Distance" also has similar existence of funny characters as harlequins.

In "Home in Distance", Fu Boheng constantly makes the audiences laugh through his garrulous flavor of Beijing. For example, when Song Mingmei and her son quarreled, he said,

"还没有的呢，屋里头跟大叫驴似的，二里地以外都能听得见". (In English: They haven't stopped yet. It just like there is a screaming donkey in the room, which can be heard from miles away.) "Happy Family" has a lot of comedy language and movements existing in different characters, such as the performance of the father Fang Yongfu when he saw Fang Tianxin kissing Wang Shuo, and the scenes of Fang Xiaolong and Li Yueyue sneaking into the house. In the first episode of "Unbeatable You", there are a lot of details such as a wedding scene of the mother-in-law chased the balloon and fell into the pool and Yang Guang found them besides the garbage cans but almost stepped on the watermelon husk, which made the whole TV series show a light comedy style.

D. Happy Ending

Family dramas such as "Home in Distance" and "Happy Family" focus on happiness rather than suffering. Although there are a lot of contradictions and conflicts, the end point of contradiction is the happy ending dominated by "harmony" and "goodness". Different from the narrative of suffering and the narrative of daily life, the works such as "Home in Distance" and "Happy Family" are more romantic, and are the beautification of life and the creation of "dream". "Home in Distance" adopted a closed-end reunion, not only Fu Boheng and Song Mingmei have a happy ending, but Bi Xuehua and Chen Baoshan, Song Fei and Guo Yanan are also in pairs. Song Fei has made a small success in documentary. Hua Wenjuan's heart knot was solved, and the old lady Luo Xiaozhuang's wish was realized. Song Ming's son also began to filial piety. Many problems that are difficult to solve in reality, such as the contradiction between mother-in-law, the maintenance of the elderly, and the division of property, have all been resolved in a comedic manner. "Happy Family" is like its name, Fang Tianxin and Wang Shuo, Fang Tianyi and Bai Xue, Fang Xiaolong and Li Yueyue are ultimately successful in career and happy in life.

IV. CULTURAL CAUSES OF COMEDY NARRATIVE IN FAMILY DRAMA

Although the "entertaining culture" and "comic spirit" of Chinese traditional aesthetic psychology have been for thousands of years, they still apply to contemporary audiences and they have become an important part of the contemporary audience's aesthetic psychology. In a modern society where online media is overwhelming and China's reform and opening up continues to deepen, it is impossible for Chinese audiences to get rid of the field created by "popular culture". It is impossible to reject the "entertainment spirit" outside the soul. Therefore, the combination of "popular culture" and "entertainment spirit" and the traditional "entertaining culture" and "comic spirit" have created the aesthetic psychology of the contemporary audience, which promoted the narrative turn of the comedy of Chinese family drama.

A. "Entertaining Culture" and "Comic Spirit"

When discussing the cultural comparison between the East and the West, Mr. Li Zehou opposes the "sin culture of

the West" and refers to the Chinese culture as "entertaining culture", pointing out that "the Chinese are rarely truly pessimistic, and they are always willing to look forward to the future optimistically." [3] The "entertaining culture" proposed by Mr. Li Zehou is not only the continuation of the saying of "The spirit of Chinese in the folk is optimistic" and "what is starting with the sorrow will finally be happy, what is starting with separation will finally be unified, what is starting with the suffering will finally be successful" [4] in Mr. Wang Guowei's "Comments on Dream of Red Mansions", but also a summary of the "comic spirit" of the Chinese nation. Confucian doctrine of the mean has been internalized into a traditional psychological structure of the Chinese nation in the historical evolution. Therefore, when treating "happiness" and "entertainment", it is often advocated as "entertaining but not indecent, mourning but not sad", which advocates that it is also necessary to have restraint in the entertainment, and it can't be like the carnival of Western comedy. In addition, in the historical development, "laughing and entertaining" gradually connected with "goodness, morality" and so on. In Sima Qian's "The Records of the Grand Historian: Funny Biography", it was mentioned that "You Dan is good at telling jokes, but his words have profound truths". When Li Yu is talking about ancient Chinese opera, he also said that "there is a great article in the humorousness and humorous place, which makes the heart of loyalty and filial piety more obvious." "Zhou Yi: Xuguazhuan" has the saying that "everything can't be a disaster for a long time, so it's followed by a solution and solution means being slow".

It is the accumulation and evolution of the viewpoints of "delightization", "moderation" and "things that can't be ended up difficultly" in Chinese traditional thoughts, which has created China's "entertaining culture" and "comic spirit", of which reflected Chinese values of "life is optimistic, people always have a belief in the future". Reflecting in the theory of literature and art, it is expressed as a constraint on entertaining and laughter, paying attention to the temperance of temperance, rejecting carnival, and demanding that entertaining and laughter should be aiming at educating people and shaping their morality well.

In "Home in Distance", "Happy Family" and "Unbeatable You", the "comic spirit" of the Chinese nation's aesthetic psychology is well controlled and interpreted. The endings of the three TV series are all directed at reunion, which corresponds to the optimistic attitude of the Chinese people. The three TV dramas are "starting with sorrow finally happy, starting with separation finally being unified, starting with the suffering finally being successful". The narrative process of the TV series is movements from sadness, separation, and suffering to joy, harmony, and success. Although there are a large number of comedy situations, comedy movements, and comedy language in the three TV series, they are always accompanied by moving, sad, and conflicting so that the so-called "sorrow and joy" won't sinking into Western carnival or developing into a farce. The three TV dramas are from the perspectives of the theme of goodness, filial piety, harmoniousness and other people's good moral sentiments and ethical norms.

B. "Popular Culture" and "Entertaining Spirit"

The reason why in the past ten years instead of the 50s or 60s of the last century, or the beginning of the reform and opening up, the comedy of the family drama in the 1980s or 1990s, the most important social motivation is that the popular culture and entertainment spirit have never penetrated to people's lives as much as today. Different scholars have explained the popular culture based on different starting points. "Popular culture is a kind of in-depth flat culture, and its function is to provide entertainment to the general public." [5] "Popular culture is the object of appreciating consumption by the public. According to market needs, it is mainly produced through mass media, and it is easy to copy, focusing on satisfying the culture of people's emotional entertainment. Different from the emphasis on the education of the mainstream culture and the emphasis on the aesthetics of the elite culture, the popular culture is more on entertainment, showing more attention to the secular life, the pursuit of the supremacy of consumption, and the supremacy of pleasure." [6] The "popular culture is based on the mass media and operates according to the laws of commodities. It aims to enable ordinary citizens to enjoy the daily sensuous and pleasant experience process, including popular poetry, popular newspapers, bestsellers, pop music, TV dramas, movies and advertisements." "Whether the popular culture text is sad or joyful, it always pursues the pleasure effect in a broad sense, so that the public's consumption, leisure or entertainment desires can be easily satisfied". [7] Although the way of definition is different, all definitions of popular culture are Fiske's richness and extension of the theory of mass culture. They all point to a common logic: first, the development of the economy, the prosperity of material life, and the increase of life pressure and the rhythm of life accelerate the modern society to encourage people to ease the pressure of survival and mental stress through entertainment; and then popular culture to meet the entertainment needs of the audience in various ways in order to obtain more profits, continues to create entertainment, resulting in the endless pursuit of profit by mass culture. As a result, the endless pursuit of profit by popular culture, the purpose of entertainment, the neglect of the ideological connotation and the value pursuit of value make the culture entertaining, and finally the society is in a state of pan-entertainment. Many TV drama and variety show creators lose their sense of responsibility, flatten their entertainment into pleasure, and provide unlimited low-level entertainment with low-level entertainment.

The comedy of the comic narrative of Chinese family dramas has a lot to do with the popularization of popular culture, cultural entertainment and the pan-compassion of TV drama production. When talking about the creation of "The Husband", the screenwriter Li Wei pointed out that "TV drama is an art, but its commodity attributes cannot be avoided. Therefore, the first essential point of choosing a theme is to have a selling point and a topicality. It is best that no one has done it before." [8] These words reveal the entertainment and commerciality of popular culture.

C. *Comedy Narrative: the Combination of Entertaining Culture and Popular Culture*

Although the writer Li Xiao first affirmed the commercial attributes of the TV series, his writing still pointed to "starting from individual emotions and triggering the audience's thinking about modern family relationships." [8] It can be seen that this TV series is the result of the conscious combination of entertainment and social responsibility and morality, and also the response to the aesthetic psychology of the Chinese audience generated by the interaction of "entertaining culture" and "popular culture".

The comedy narrative of family drama stands at the intersection of popular culture and the "entertaining" tradition. Although it is also aimed at the entertainment audience to obtain commercial profits, it does not flatten entertainment into pleasure. It should make the audience feel after the laughter, from the emotional pleasure to the joy of rationality and the joy of concept, truly realizing "entertaining but not indecent" and "being in the profound truths".

V. CONCLUSION

Those who have writings pass down to the world must first have a heart that can be handed down. Excellent TV drama works should be songs of truth, goodness and beauty, and whipping against false and ugly, as long as using morality to lead the fashion. Inspiring thoughts, warming the soul and cultivating life with excellent works are the responsibilities and duties of contemporary literary and art workers. The comedy narrative turn in the Chinese family drama is a good blend of popular culture and Chinese traditional entertaining culture, coordinating the market and art of literary and artistic works, the relationship between entertainment and responsibility, and creating a fine art like "Home in Distance". However, some tendencies also need attention. First, the excessive consumption of subject resources, the profit-seeking nature of market capital determines that Chinese TV drama production has not been able to get rid of the homogenization cycle. How to make the drama narrative style of family drama often new needs more courage to innovate. Rather, the comedy narrative of the family drama has presented a narrative tendency of "quiet contradictions and ease of resolution", which not only is contrary to the spirit of realism, but also easily puts the family drama into a situation of separation from the times and from life.

If it can get a new day, it can be kept new every day, newer and newer. The Chinese family drama has gone through different stages such as suffering narrative, daily life narrative and comedy narrative with the development of the times. The multi-coexistence of family drama creation, continuous exploration and innovation not only is the inevitable choice for the family drama production to get rid of the homogenization trap, but also reflects the requirements of the times and the only way for the people's voices.

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