

Features of Daily Life Narration in Korean Family Drama

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Abstract—Korean family dramas leave the impression of slow narrative pace and long running time on Chinese audiences. But it is this kind of Korean family drama, which is different from the fast pace of American TV series, that has long been favored by Chinese audiences. This is inseparable from the features of daily life narration of Korean family dramas. The daily life narration of Korean family dramas makes it easy to resonate with the audience. This paper mainly discusses the narrative characteristics of Korean family dramas from three aspects: daily life logic, humanistic care and artistic processing.

Keywords—Korean family drama; daily life narration; humanistic care

I. INTRODUCTION

Family dramas have different titles in different cultural backgrounds. In South Korean they are called "family dramas", while people in China call them "family ethics dramas". "Family drama" emphasizes that the space where the story takes place is the family and the description objects are the family members. "Family ethics drama" emphasizes that its narrative content is based on ethical relations rather than other human relationships. Different ways of expression as they adopt, the main content of the narrative is the same, mainly around the daily life of the family.

It seems that Korean family dramas are not unique in depicting the daily life of ordinary people. Chinese family dramas, American indoor sitcoms and Chinese indoor sitcoms all seem to depict the daily life of families. However, influenced by the traditional historical narrative of Chinese literature, Chinese family dramas always try to achieve a grand narrative beauty from the long river of history. The daily life of sitcom is full of excessive funny and entertainment, which is too far away from the real daily life. Therefore it is difficult for the audience to have a strong sense of substitution in the process of watching, so that the audience cannot get emotional compensation and resonate with such drama. Only Korean family dramas have a unique feature of daily family life narration of due to the high event density, low event intensity and rich details.

II. THE CONNOTATION OF DAILY FAMILY LIFE NARRATION

A. Daily Life

The Eastern European philosopher Agnes Heller pointed out that daily life can be defined as a collection of individual reproductive factors that also make social reproduction possible." Specifically, daily life "is a general term for daily consumption activities, daily communication activities and daily concept activities, which are aimed at maintaining individual survival and reproduction. It is An in-itself quasi-essential objectification domain maintained by cultural factors such as tradition, habit, experience, blood relationship and natural emotion with repetitive thinking and repetitive practice as the basic way of survival".

B. Daily Family Life

In addition to studying everyday life, Agnes Heller noticed the special place "home" occupied in everyday life. She said: "Home is the fixed point in the space of everyday life, the solid place where we 'start' and return to at certain times. This solid location is what we call home. ... 'Going home' should mean returning to the solid place where we know, where we're used to, where we feel safe and where our relationships are strongest. From this statement it can be seen that home is not only the space for people to maintain individual survival, the starting point and end point of people's life, but more importantly is the emotional destination and spiritual harbor of people. In People's Daily life, the daily life in family space not only occupies the most time, but also constitutes the main content of individual life course.

C. Daily Family Life Narration

Daily family life narration is the narrative behavior that takes the daily life in the family space as the main content. It features the space of occurrence at home, repetitiveness, trivial and a good deal of episodes, not intense conflicts; high dependence on details. With the awakening of human consciousness and the enhancement of individual discourse power, ordinary people's daily family life not only enters the field of narrative, but also becomes an important part of micro-narrative corresponding to grand narrative, and becomes an important category of art reflecting real life.

D. TV Dramas and Daily Family Life Narration

Television, unlike movies, does not seek spectacle and dream-making. The appreciation space and way of TV drama decide that it is closer to daily life and has a natural inner connection with daily life. Yin Hong, a Chinese scholar, once said, "Generally speaking, TV dramas do not pursue the spectacle of scenes, the complexity and sophistication of stories, the tension of narrative space and picture space, and the extraordinariness of characters and events. Most TV dramas take our daily living space as the background and people's daily life as the material. Even emperors, generals and ministers should be restored to ordinary people's living conditions." The universality of daily family life and the characteristics of the TV series themselves determine that the TV series will inevitably take the daily family life as the performance content, and the family drama about the daily family life will certainly exist as a category of TV series for a long time.

III. DAILY LIFE IN KOREAN FAMILY DRAMAS

As mentioned above, daily life mainly includes three major aspects: daily consumption, daily communication and daily conceptual activities. As an artistic processing of real life, Korean family dramas focus on daily communication activities and occasionally involve daily consumption and conceptual activities. The reason for this tendency of choice is that the essence of narrative art is the generation and solution of contradictions, which are mainly generated in the process of interpersonal communication. Based on this kind of choice, although the space of the family involves the place such as sitting room, bedroom, kitchen, toilet, what these places execute in Korea family drama is not the function in its real life, but exist as the space in which people develop dialogues. Next, based on the basic spatial forms of the family, the daily life of the three works — "Golden Era Of Daughter In Law", "What Happens to My Family?" and "All together" is analyzed.

A. Everyday Life in the Living Room

Actually, the most important space in Korean family drama is sitting room or dining-room, because sitting room or dining-room is the only space that can gather all family members together. Because of this, the daily act of eating in Korean family dramas is most often shown. But for writers and directors, dinner is not what they want to show. It's the conversation that family members have during dinner, and it's what the audience likes to enjoy. In episode 1 of "Golden Era Of Daughter In Law", the dinner scene is a very important scene. Although there is no contradiction in this process, the audience can clearly understand the status of grandmother, father and mother in the family by watching the small things that happened during the meal, and they also have an understanding of the daily life atmosphere of this family. In episode 8 of the family drama "All together", there was a drinking scene in the living room which gathers all the family members of the double widows except the eldest daughter. The scene revolves around the eldest son's purchase of a car, which shows the optimistic and harmonious atmosphere of the whole family, and introduces

the relationship between the eldest son and the daughter of the chairman into the dialogue, showing the relationship between the two from the side. The first episode of "What Happens to My Family?" also presents a dining room scene. But different from the previous two eating scenes, in this scene only the father and his sister are shown, because the younger son and the elder daughter get up too late, and the second son doesn't want to eat because he was on a night shift. But through the conversation in the living room, what can be seen are the infinite care of the father to the three children and the indifference of the three children to the father, which is exactly the core problem to be solved in this family drama.

B. Daily Life in the Bedroom

As a relatively private space, the bedroom determines that the life and dialogue presented in it are more between husband and wife and sisters, so the daily life in a bedroom involves two characters and such life scene dialogue is more concentrated, involving more concentrated events. In "Golden Era Of Daughter In Law", there are many conversations in the bedroom. Here are three special examples of co-presence of mother and mother in law, mother in law and daughter-in-law and grandmother and granddaughter in one bedroom. Generally it is rare for the mothers of a couple, or mother-in-law and daughter-in-law to share one bedroom, but the show's comedic style makes the impossible possible. And these three scenes perform the same narrative function, which is the sincere communication between the two sides of the dialogue, narrowing the distance between the two sides of the dialogue and promoting the comedy trend of the plot. The bedroom space presented in "All together" is also quite unique, with one for two sisters-in-laws and the other for two cousins. This kind of character relation decided the dialog in the bedroom is more likely to be the communication and conflicts between the two people, like the conflict between two cousins for the lost money in the wallets, and that of sisters-in-law because their daughters fall in love with the same man. There are also many presentations of the bedroom space in "What Happens to My Family?", but they are mainly focused on secondary families, such as the chairman and fiancé, hospital director and wife. But the core of the dialogues between the two sides involves the core characters, such as the marriage of their second son and the president's daughter and the marriage of the eldest daughter and the chairman's son. This arrangement is based on the logic of real life and corresponds to it.

C. Daily Life in the Kitchen and Bathroom

As mentioned above, each space of Korean family dramas performs no functions in the real world, but serves as a platform for dialogue and contradiction presentation. So in "Golden Era Of Daughter In Law", "What Happens to My Family?" and "All Together", the kitchen and bathroom also assume such narrative function. In the first episode of "Golden Era Of Daughter In Law", even though the mother is the only cook in the kitchen, it is not about the cooking process, but about the relationship between people. Even when grandmothers, sons and granddaughters are not in the space, the writers still connect them through dialogues and

actions. The action of applying a plaster reflects the relationship between the mother and father, waking up the daughter tells the relationship between the mother and daughter and choking by water represents the relationship between the mother and grandmother. One incident that occurred in the bathroom in "What Happens to My Family?" was the fake pregnancy of the eldest daughter. The dialogue develops in this space is between the couple, the eldest daughter and chairman. The privacy of toilet determines the association with secret of the dialogue that spreads out in this space.

IV. THE FEATURES OF FAMILY DAILY LIFE NARRATION

A. *Respect for the Life Logic*

The family drama is different from other TV series such as video series, historical drama and suspense drama, taking family daily life as the description object requires Korean family drama to be as close to reality as possible in the description process of daily life. Only in this way can the audience identify with the storyline and characters presented by family dramas. The reality here does not refer to the objective record of family life as it is, but to grasp the essence and logic of daily family life, thus presenting an artistic reality. The life logic here includes that the relationship between characters in family dramas should be close to life, the behaviors of family members at home should be close to life, and the clothes of family members at home should be close to real life. In other words, the daily life of family dramas must be consistent with the audience's cognition of family life, and consistent with the basic logic of life, so as to win the audience's recognition and establish the realistic tone of family dramas. This means that the performance of the eldest daughter in the workplace and at home should be two different styles; the president of the hospital and the wife of the president wear pajamas when her son-in-law bursts into the home; and the wife of youngest son in "All Together" should be dress differently and have different postures in the garage and western restaurant. Respecting the logic of life is the basis for "everyday life" to be like "real life" in family dramas.

B. *The Concern of Humanistic Care*

It is not the ultimate value of Korean family drama to let the audience get an artistic reality through the description of family daily life. The screenwriters and directors of Korean family dramas do not record and reproduce the daily family life objectively, but choose and filter the reality of life. What guides the screenwriters and directors to choose subjectively should be the humanistic care from the creators. Such humanistic care requires the screenwriter to affirm the subjectivity of each person in the play, to care, love and respect the characters in the play, to affirm the value and significance of their lives, and to grasp the emotions and sorrows of each person in the play from the standpoint of those who have witnessed it. Only in this way can each character in the play have a soul instead of being a speaking doll, and each of their actions be given a rational motive. Only based on this standpoint can the cousin's behavior of

stealing her cousin's boyfriend be reasonable and forgiven, and only in this way can the cold appearance of the second son become easy to understand.

C. *Art Processing*

Presenting the daily life of the family with humanistic care can only make the audience understand each character, but cannot make the audience be attracted by the story. The charm of a story does not lie in how close it is to real life, but in how heterogeneous it is to real life. In other words, although the audience expects to see the images that can arouse their resonance in the film and television works, they never want to see their own life, in addition to the pressure of work, family affairs and constant repetition without changes and waves. Viewers expect family dramas to evoke the aesthetic emotions such as tension, insecurity, sadness or joy. This aesthetic expectation requires that the family drama should not be linear and coherent in presenting the daily life of the family, but should be the presentation of an event chain after artistic processing. That is, the event density and intensity presented in Korean family dramas should go far beyond real life itself. In other words, the daily life of family dramas should be one event after another, one change after another. The high-density events and the rhythm formed by changes are the charm of family dramas to attract audiences. If daily life is dull, then the daily life presented in the family drama through artistic processing is full of changes and events, away from the wateriness.

V. CONCLUSION

The daily life narration of Korean family dramas is seemingly plain, which seems to be the restoration and reproduction of real family life. However, in essence, it is an artistic depiction of daily family life by scriptwriters, directors and other creative personnel through the arrangement of narrative time and space, combined with narrative skills such as suspense narrative and contrast narrative. In addition to these characteristics of narrative form, attention must be paid to the narrative content, especially the value of family drama. Although the two years of Chinese family dramas also saw the emergence of works that mainly depict daily life, such as "All Is Well", TV dramas' presentation of "evil" went far beyond the praise of "good". From this point of view, to really capture the narrative skills of family dramas' daily life and it is definitely not just the narrative form that needs to be changed in Chinese family dramas.

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