

The Dramatic Narrative Tendency of Korean Family Drama

Yuzhen Guo

Media Technology College
Liaocheng University
Liaocheng, China

Wenwen Bi

Media Technology College
Liaocheng University
Liaocheng, China

Abstract—Korean family dramas use the "narrative" thinking to process the daily life of the family, which makes the Korean family drama show a dramatic narrative tendency. There are a lot of reappearances and expressions of daily life in Korean family dramas. This is the main feature of Korean family dramas that are different from other TV dramas. It also determines that the Korean family drama presents only a dramatic narrative tendency rather than a complete and thorough dramatic narrative. This tendency is manifested in four aspects: causality, coincidence, suspense, and character setting.

Keywords—Korean family drama; dramatic narrative tendency; suspense; coincidence

I. INTRODUCTION

Although the Korean family drama focuses on the reproduction of the details of the family's daily life, the family drama is not the original ecology of the Korean family's daily life. There is a big difference between "daily life" in family drama and "traditional life" in reality. This difference is not only manifested in the fact that the functions performed in each space are not as single as in real life, but also in Korean family dramas. The "narrative" thinking is used to process the daily life of the family, which makes the Korean family drama present a "dramatic narrative tendency".

II. DRAMATIC NARRATIVE AND THEATRICALITY

Like movies, other artistic elements have been absorbed in the development of television. Early TV dramas still retain traces of dramatic performances in terms of plot arrangement, character movements, stage design, etc. For example, the plot, time and place are very concentrated, and the flexibility of TV processing time and space is not fully utilized; character movements are more exaggerated, not natural enough, ignoring the role of camera scene in narrative; stage design is symbolized, and not realistic enough, ignoring the authenticity of camera recording. In other words, the early TV series still have not got rid of the drama the movies. The TV series is like a drama on TV. It has a strong trace of drama. This is called theatricality.

The dramatic narrative is completely not equal to theatricality. It refers to the TV drama giving full play to the

advantages of TV art narrative, making full use of the time and space mechanism of TV art and the audiovisual language to carry out narrative. However, its narrative structure presents a kind of drama, which includes a special emphasis on the role of conflict, emphasizing the design of the storyline structure, paying special attention to the use of traditional drama narratives such as suspense, chance, coincidence, and sudden turn. The whole narrative is full of inner tension and compact rhythm. In the framework of dramatic narrative, daily life is stripped from narrative. Contradictions and conflicts dominate the development of narratives and the advancement of plots. Most commercial films present dramatic narratives.

III. DRAMATIC NARRATIVE TENDENCY

The dramatic narrative tendency is to move closer to the dramatic narrative, but the dramatic narrative is not the dominant narrative. Taking the Korean family drama as an example, although the narrative of family drama adopts suspense, coincidence and other narrative means, there are fewer expressions commonly used in dramas such as sudden turn. In addition, there are a lot of reappearances and expressions of daily life in Korean family dramas, which is the main feature of Korean family dramas that are different from other TV dramas. This also determines that the Korean family drama presents only a dramatic narrative tendency rather than a complete and thorough dramatic narrative. For Korean family dramas, there must be no performance on the daily life of the family. If they lose this, they will lose the meaning of existence. Similarly, it may not show a tendency of dramatic narrative. Because only the common narrative techniques of some drama narratives can be used to make the daily life of the family full of drama and appreciation, daily narratives, detailed narratives, and dramatic narrative tendencies constitute the troika of Korean family drama narratives, and jointly build the image world of Korean family dramas.

IV. THE REPRESENTATION OF DRAMA NARRATIVE TENDENCY IN KOREAN FAMILY DRAMA

A. Focusing on Causality

The keynote of realism requires that the creation of family dramas must conform to the logic of reality. The most

important of these is the causal relationship between the events. Fiske discusses realism in "TV Culture": It seems that no author's intervention invisibly adds realism, making people feel that the camera is only recording what is happening, and at the same time, it makes people feel as if they are immersive, and think that it is happening. In order to achieve this reality, it is necessary to ensure that the connections between the various elements and their interrelationships are not only clear but also logical, ensuring that the narrative follows the basic rules of causality; it is also necessary to make sure that each set of elements helps make it meaningful, and nothing is a knot or accident. [1] Li Xianjie also defines the story in "Narrative Film" as a narrative event with a time-space evolution process and causality. [2] In "Story", Robert McGee said: Causality drives a story, causing motivated actions to lead to results, which in turn become the cause of other outcomes. Thus, in the chain reaction of the various segments that lead to the climax of the story, the various layers of the conflict are interconnected, showing a real interlinkage. [3] Through the above discussion, it is not difficult to find out the importance of "causal relationship" to the story. It can be considered that the causal relationship presented in the TV series is a reproduction of the inevitability of the real world. Only by conforming to causality can the so-called realism be realized. Taking "Golden Era of Daughter in Law" "What Happens to My Family?" and "All together" as the examples, the causal relationship before and after this event exists everywhere. For example, it is because the wife of the dean of the "Golden Era of Daughter in Law" misunderstood the responsibility and mission of the daughter-in-law that she would be very dissatisfied and picking of her first and second daughter-in-law. It is also because of her behavior that caused the dissatisfaction of her own biological mother. The teaching of the bedside before her mother's death made her realize her mistakes, then changed her behavior and accepted the fact the her son and the first daughter-in-law were together. In "All together", the reason why the Chinese and the youngest children did not sacrifice their dead husband within 15 years was because they had not found the body of the husband. This was the logical premise that the younger son lost his memory and appeared in another family. It is her conviction that after she discovered the fact that her husband is still alive, she changed her obedient and meek personality and tried to return to her previous life. In "What Happens to My Family?", the character of the second son is very mean and has a bad attitude towards his father. This is also because his mother died very early in his life. And because his mother gave birth to a third child, it is logical for him to be full of resentment against his younger brother.

Without causality, there will be no stories, no narratives, no TV dramas, and family dramas will be accepted and recognized by most viewers. Paying attention to causality is an inevitable choice.

B. Focusing on the Use of Suspense

Suspense can be said to be a common means of typical narrative techniques and structural stories in drama. Suspense plays an important role in increasing the appeal of

the story. Although family dramas are not as highly dependent on suspense as suspense or detectives, suspense is still a common narrative construct in family dramas. Suspense refers to a storytelling skill that can mobilize the active participation of the audience, and is an indispensable element of the story. The essence of suspense is the detainment of information, that is, it does not present all the information to the audience, but presents an incomplete, partially small part, which makes the audience generate tensions, uneasiness and other emotions based on expectations based on undisclosed information. In the "Golden Era of Daughter in Law", the little pig that the grandmother dreamed of was a suspense throughout the whole TV series. From the first episode of the TV series, the grandmother was puzzled by the dream of catching the piglet. In the last episode, the grandmother once again dreamed of the incident of the pig and the granddaughter and the granddaughter who had children at the same time. The pig actually represents the blessing and represents the continuation and inheritance of life. In "What Happens to My Family?", the trigger point of the whole TV series is that the father found out that he was incurable. This information is actually used as suspense. The father knows that the aunt knows that the audience knows, but the main event participants, including the eldest daughter, the youngest son, and the second son, did not know. The TV series created suspense through the partial deduction of information; In "All together", this TV series detained a message from the beginning, that is, the younger son's body hadn't been found after the accident at sea. This left hope for the audience and the children, and also laid the groundwork for the conflict.

C. Focusing on the Use of Coincidence

Coincidence drives a fictional world, causing unmotivated actions to trigger events that do not lead to further results, thus disassembling the story into unrelated pieces and an open ending, showing the existence of real unrelatedness. [3] If the causal relationship represents the inevitability, it is the norm that must be observed in the design of the TV drama narrative, and then coincidence is a choice. TV dramas can't be without causality, but it can ignore coincidences. Family drama is a category of family narrative content. The content of family daily life determines that the intensity of internal conflict cannot be too high. In order to enhance the comedy and tragic nature of the story, the use of coincidence is often an ideal choice for the narrative structure of family drama. It is precisely because of the massive coincidences that the family drama shows a distinctly dramatic narrative tendency.

Chernyshevsky once said: Accidentality is an indispensable attribute of beauty. [4] France writer Balzac also said: Occasionally, the greatest novelist in the world, if you want to be inexhaustible, as long as you study the accidentality it will work. The famous Chinese artist Jiao Juyin also said: The great writers handed over the task of directly revealing the inevitability of society to history, and they made an essay on contingency. These arguments affirm the importance of accidental narrative. Robert McGee, from the perspective of creation, expressed his emphasis on

coincidence. He said: Coincidence is a part of life after all, and often a powerful part, which has a major impact on people's lives, and then, just as it came ridiculously, it disappeared wildly without a trace. Therefore, the solution is not to avoid coincidence, but to dramatize how it enters life without meaning, and then to gain meaning as time goes by, showing how the random anti-logic becomes the logic of life reality. Regarding coincidence, it is generally considered that three conditions are required: the first is that there is a certain connection between two things or events; the second is that the connection is not pre-arranged, but is randomly generated; and the third is that the connection itself has its own characteristics and has a certain narrative function.

In the three TV series "Golden Era of Daughter In Law", "What Happens to My Family?" and "All Together", coincidence is ubiquitous. This coincidence is reflected in the mutual love of the children of both parties in the "Golden Era Of Daughter in Law", and finally realizes the comedic results of the daughter of the Li family married the daughter of Zhao, and the son of the Zhao family married and the daughter of Li, which also reflected in a large number of incidents. For example, the prospective granddaughter-in-law is ignorant of the emotions, and ran into the restaurant of the future mother-in-law's restaurant, sending a drunken madness. Another example, the father rushed into the bedroom of the younger son, just to see the younger son fell on a girl, or the father came back from the outside, happened to see his eldest daughter kiss a strange man. One more example, a family's daughter and daughter-in-law have to have children on the same day and at the same time. A lot of coincidences appear in Korean family dramas. It is not a single case, but a narrative strategy that is common in Korean family dramas. The emergence of a large number of coincidences is an important means of creating a sense of comedy. Korean family drama is an art of dreaming, because the beauty and happiness of life presented to the audience hides the misfortune and hardships of life. In order to allow the audience to relax outside the stressful life, it is a common practice to create a comedy feeling through coincidence; the use of coincidence is also an important skill for complicating contradictions. The Korean family drama is described in the daily life of the family. In order to make the life that the audiences often see is enjoyable and dramatic, and coincidence is a means that must be used in Korean family dramas.

D. Theatricality of the Character Setting

Korean family dramas show that the relationship, events and content are in line with causality, and use a lot of details to describe the language and movement of the characters. This narrative strategy makes the Korean family drama closer to the real life of Korean society. However, the Korean family drama is still a fictional story. In addition to the use of suspense, coincidence and other narrative constructs, the premise of the more important Korean family drama narrative is very dramatic, far from the real life foundation. Taking the "Golden Era of Daughter in Law" as an example, the core concern of this TV series is the triangular relationship, which has little chance of being in

real life. The premise of "What Happens to My Family?" is that the younger son survives in the sea and loses memory, which is less likely to happen in real life. In "All together", the story of the mother's death and the father's serious illness is dramatic. In addition, the family in this TV series is not lacking father's death, mother's death, or both parents are gone. The probability that a similar family will establish a marriage relationship in reality can be said to be minimal. The dramatic character set by the characters is the most important representation of the dramatic narrative tendency of Korean family dramas. However, these dramatic settings, which can hardly afford to think logically, have not caused the audience's awareness. It is easy for the audience to ignore these logic loopholes and sink into the narrative network woven by a lot of details and daily life descriptions and touching emotional entanglements. From this perspective, the details of narrative and daily life narratives have become an important means of obscuring the unreasonable setting of Korean drama characters. When the audience is infected with details and daily life, emotional conflicts, dramatic dramas, etc., things that require rational thinking will be forgotten.

V. CONCLUSION

The narrative features of daily life and the dramatic narrative tendencies of Korean family dramas complement each other. The narrative features of daily life make the content of Korean family dramas closer to the reality of daily life, giving the audience an illusion and false appearance: this is our life. Based on this judgment, the audience, especially the Korean female audience as a housewife, regards the family drama as a side event, which makes it easier to stimulate emotional resonance and produce an emotional compensation effect. However, the narrative of daily life is still a narrow narrative in essence. It is a fictional narrative through the processing of time, space, perspective, and detail. In this process, the dramatic narrative tendency is an inevitable choice. This tendency makes the Korean family drama have the core of daily life and the core of the drama story, so that it has a sense of intimacy without losing the tension and attraction of narrative.

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