

Research on Zhang Ailing's Film Screenplays

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Abstract. Compared with the film screenplays in the 1940s of Shanghai, Zhang Ailing's film screenplays in Hong Kong are more proficient in the grasp and use of the video media, and they explore the types of films that match the taste of the audience. It fills up the gap of Chinese film creation in urban romantic drama and plays an important role in Chinese film creation. Based on the author's learning and practical experience, this paper first explains the theme of Zhang Ailing's screenplays, then analyzes the style of Zhang Ailing's film screenplays, and finally sums up the causes of the Zhang Ailing's film style.

Introduction

Zhang Ailing, as a talented novelist, begins to explore her non-fiction texts by combining the thinking and creation of screenplays. There is no strict distinction between the early film screenplay and the stage play, and they are all in a state of exploration [1]. They turn literature into a three-dimensional audio-visual effect, which is also a fascinating temptation for Zhang Ailing, so she likes film literature. Zhang Ailing's appreciation of movies is somewhat different from that of ordinary people. The film screenplay is a room in her spiritual home that cannot be buried by the quicksand of history, from which she makes another sound [2]. Although throughout China's film history, Zhang Ailing has always been out of various trends and sports, and she only walks on the edge, but walking is to take a picture of the world, so, we can hear her voice again in her film screenplay text.

Thematic Interpretation of Zhang Ailing's Film Screenplay

Urban Imagination Complex. Zhang Ailing's film screenplays are written in two periods: one is 1946-1949 in Shanghai and the other is 1957-1964 in Hong Kong. These two cities are the backdrop of the characters' activities in the film. Zhang Ailing has a different attachment to urban civilization and love: "I like to listen to the sound of the market. Others who are more poetic than me listen to the pins and the tsunami on their pillow, I have to hear the tram to sleep". She focuses on the complex heart of secular men and women, and highlights the colorful and complicated urban life with her keen insight and unique aesthetic style [3]. In July 1946, famous director Sang Hu was introduced by Ke Ling to Zhang Ailing and invited her to write a script for Wenhua Pictures. Over the next four years, Zhang Ailing and Sang Hu worked on three films: *Endless Love*, *Long Live My Wife* and *Sad Middle-Aged*. The background of all three films is taken from Shanghai and the characters are defined as petty bourgeoisie or middle class. Apart from living in Tianjin for several years and studying in Hong Kong for three years, Zhang Ailing has never left Shanghai, and her life experience has already been incorporated into the city. Zhang Ailing's film screenplays often reflect the changes in interpersonal relationships and ethical concepts brought about by the depiction of life in the times, and write out the imagination of the city. Under the constraints of the narrow theme of creating tender styles in large factories, it is impossible to make a big breakthrough, so it makes some subtle shift change in the traditional ethics, such as gender (male and female roles). She constantly uses new techniques to rewrite popular dramas or infiltrate modernity and urbanization elements, introduces many new viewpoints and develops characters personalities and gender war, and highlights the possibility that urban women have greater autonomy [4-5].

The Home and Country Imagination in the Context of Hong Kong. The *June Bride* represents a love comedy that includes most of the film works of Zhang Ailing's, including a romantic comedy that continues Zhang Ailing's masterpiece—Hollywood comedy. If Zhang Ailing's early film screenplays such as *Endless Love* and *Long Live My Wife* are merely a reference to Hollywood witty comedy techniques, then these works can be said to be a direct application of Hollywood's humorous comedy model. As a type of film, Hollywood comedies consciously follow a line that goes against realism requirements, which is a particular tradition of comedy. This is especially true of romantic comedies. The characters in romantic comedies tend to have a fictional identity, and the space in which the story unfolds is similar to the traditional studio with a hypothetical character. The protagonist is either rich or famous, at least has no worries about food and clothing, the only pastime and communication is love and marriage. Stories often revolve around love and marriage, and conflict is concentrated between the sexes [6]. This romantic comedy of gender conflict officially appeared in the 1930s and continues to this day, which is concentrated in men's pursuit of women. On the whole, Zhang Ailing's love comedy written in Hong Kong is more skillful in comedy technique and continues the theme of marriage and love, but it has lost the cultural connotation of the gloomy "home" that appears in the early' works. As the most advanced cultural symbol, film not only meets the needs of entertainment and knowledge, but also a vane of cultural change. This kind of "one-family" demand is not only the realistic desire of Hong Kong people, but also a mainstream voice of Hong Kong society at that time. Taking the struggle between Cantonese and Mandarin films as an example, by the 1950s and 1960s, Cantonese films and Mandarin films have basically coexisted side by side to meet the needs of different audiences. It is in this peaceful situation, Zhang Ailing's South-North series film emerges [7].

The Style of Zhang Ailing's Film Screenplay

Repetitive Narratology. Zhang Ailing writes the same theme over and over again, it is not just copying ancient memories, but also innovating. If two works of the same theme are juxtaposed and taken into account, the two will complement each other. Zhang Ailing once puts forward that : "as long as the subjects are not too specialized, such as love, marriage, age, illness and death, which are the quite common phenomenon, they can be written from countless different points of view, and they will not be finished in a lifetime." She does not resist writing about recent subjects because of the different views presented inside. Wang Dewei and Su Weizhen also point out that Zhang Ailing tends to repeat the theme of her work in the late writing career. Wang Weide mentions that she not only rewrites the *Golden Lock* into *Resentful Woman*, but also translates the *Golden Lock* into English and then translates the English version into Chinese, constantly carving out the same subject over and over again [8]. He regards the *Contrast Notes*, Zhang Ailing's last book published in 1992 as an example of her "repetitive narratology." He points out that she collects photographs from her childhood to old age, and looks at the pictures to write totally based on the past. Her film screenplays written in the 1960s can also show the feature of narrative "repetition", "roundabout" and "derivation".

The Non-Conformist Posture. In Zhang Ailing's film screenplays, there are two types of screenplays that are particularly successful. The first one is the Urban Romantic Comedy inspired by the Screwball Comedy of Hollywood in the 1930s and 1940s in the United States. The subjects of this kind of works are the love of men and women and the war between the sexes in the metropolis. They extract western popular dramas and they are romantic ethical films and light comedies based on the structure of drama. Although the drama style is strongly influenced by Hollywood, its feelings are quite traditional of China, it tries to avoid the entanglement of post-war trauma and poverty, and turns to the middle-class emotional pastime [9].

The Desolation Showed by Comedy. The actors' slightly exaggerated performance, endless jokes and witty and humorous dialogue among the characters constitute the unique style of Zhang Ailing's comedy. At first glance, there is no "desolation" atmosphere in her novels at all, but through the lively custom comedy "coat", she can still produce her personal "desolation" view of love and outlook on life. It is herself who first proposes "desolation" to describe her article. Zhang

Ailing uses *My Own Article* to explain the style of her works and respond to the criticism of her novels by scholars at that time. In this article, she puts forward "desolation" aesthetics, and later comments agree that her style is "desolation," she said: "I do not like heroic, I like sad, like desolation more. Heroic has nothing but strength, no beauty, and lacks of humanity. The heroic looks like the color matched by bright red and green, and it is one kind of strong contrast. But it is more stimulating than enlightening. The reason why desolation has a deeper aftertaste is that it looks like lush green with peach red and is a mixed contrast. She prefers "desolation". When researching the content of her comedy film screenplay, we can find that its "desolation" style still exists. Zhang Ailing's sense of desolation is embodied in her unique experience and understanding of life and fate. Her works reveal the life perception of a lost person everywhere. Pain and uneasiness are the eternal themes of life. Zhang Ailing rewrites the weaker ordinary people on the background of desolation in the form of "amusing", and understands thoroughly the collapsing and incomplete life and love.

The Formation Cause of Zhang Ailing's Film Style

Market Consciousness of Screenplay Creation. Expressing the life of the middle class or civil class is Zhang Ailing's own specialty. Neither Yu Jiayin nor Chan Sizhen is extremely poor in the city. In terms of economic conditions, they are the middle class, who live the closest to the lives of the most ordinary people. The adaptation and writing of the text from the novel to the stage play *Love of the City*, and the later screenplay writing, *Long Live My Wife* and *Endless Love*, show her own sensitivity to the market consciousness and her mastery of artistic forms exploration. According to the special issue or fragmentary comments published in the newspapers at that time, Zhang Ailing's novel has been widely recognized for its characteristics of stimulating the sense of vision and hearing [10]. Although some critics express that the views in the novel are dull occasionally, it is unanimously recognized for its artistic skills.

Immersion of Western Elements. Zhang Ailing's view of comedy initially appears when she is a fan and a critic of the film. The success experience of Zhang Ailing's film screenplays to go by Hollywood comedy is that "it is patched as well as possible". Originally, this kind of trivial, vulgar and flat housewife life can no matter have the comedy feeling. While Zhang Ailing's "patch and repair" let this plain life have twists and turns, as she says in the *Long Live My Wife*, it is a ripple. Examining several subtle scenes in *Long Live My Wife*, Li Oufan considers that Zhang Ailing has intentions in this aspect and modestly points out that this might be his own over-reading. For example, why the wife hides the pieces and hides them under the sofa mat after the biddy breaking the bowl in the beginning [11]. At this time we do not know what the wife's character, and we only know that the girl accidentally breaks the vase. One of the little themes show that maybe something is broken, and the wife wants to fix it. We can know that the whole process of her marriage is thought of as a supplement for the whole family, and a sufficient complement to her husband. To sum up a theme of the Chinese family ethics story in a Chinese way: In family life, it is not women who get their own happiness, but women who make the whole family happy. Women can get some personal satisfaction in the process of complementing others. From this example, it has the possibility of "over-reading", but Mrs. Chan does get an almost perverse satisfaction from this repair, enjoy the greatness of self-sacrifice and feel powerful for the ingenious exercise of her mind.

Summary

The main style of Zhang Ailing's film screenplays is reflected as repeated narratology, maverick demeanor and comedy with "desolation". Commercial consideration is one of the important factors for her comedy creation, and it further explores the causes of this style. To sum up, Zhang Ailing's film screenplays are of great research value that can not be neglected. They are entertaining works for film researchers and literary researchers. They are important but not fully explored materials for the research of Zhang Ailing's creation. They are also works of literary appreciation.

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