Research on the Landscape of domestic leading female dramas from the perspective of visual Communication

Chenxin Zhang
School of Literature, Baotou Teachers' College, China
Corresponding author E-mail:1357094021@qq.com

Abstract: Legend of Zhen Huan exploded in 2012, and Chinese female dramas began to enter the Chinese TV drama market as a new type and formed a phenomenon culture in a few years. It is worth paying attention to that in addition to the brilliant narration techniques, the female characters in the drama also arouse hot discussion on the Internet. In the field of visual communication, this paper will conduct landscape research on domestic female lead dramas to explore the relationship between the female characters' costume and the audience's viewing duration and frequency.
Keywords: Female lead drama, Landscape society, Visual domain

1. Introduction

The concept of "big female drama" has been widely seen on online forums since 2015. The genre focuses on portraying female characters and revolves around women's coming-of-age stories. The birth of this genre of TV series stems from the rise of female consciousness and the promotion of women's social status. Therefore, this type of TV series focuses on the portrayal of female characters and develops around the growth stories of women. The popularity of "big female drama" and the heated discussion about female culture have conveyed the audience's resonance for the situation of women and their expectations and demands for themselves.

From the Legend of Zhen Huan, which hit the screen in 2012, to a new type of TV drama, the "Great female drama" has swept the TV drama market. It has only been a few years since it started from scratch, and the phenomenon culture formed is incomparable to other new TV dramas. After 2016, more and more TV series with "Big female drama" as the slogan appeared, and caused hot discussion online. From Beauty Weiyoung (2016) to the Full Moon in Bloom (2017), The Legend of Chu (2017), Story of Yanxi Palace (2018), as well as the successive hits of Menghualu and The Wind Blows Half Summer in 2022, female lead dramas have not only won high ratings, but also achieved high profits. As a cultural product that has not lost its popularity for several years, the success of "Big female lead drama" is worth analyzing.

In addition to its focus on narrative modes, current studies on female main plays are mostly carried out from the perspective of female images to interpret female consciousness through images. Take "The Wind Blows Pinxia" as an example. In addition to its brilliant performance in narrative techniques, the female lead, Xu Banxia, triggered a heated discussion on the Internet about her dress in the play once it was broadcast. For this reason, we have to wonder, is the

excellent production of the female characters in the "Big female Main drama" the reason for its popularity? Under the trend of increasingly sophisticated Dao Yan, is it influenced by the landscape society, so as to affect the audience's expectation of female characters?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Literature review on the basic concept of "big female main drama"

"Big Female Main drama" has caused the academic research from many perspectives. Although the concept has been discussed online and in the media since around 2016, it didn't enter the academia until 2017.

Domestic scholars' existing research articles and achievements on "female main drama" can be roughly divided into two aspects: from the research on "female main drama" itself, mainly from the perspective of character image, female consciousness, TV drama narrative mode, communication mode. For example, Lv Zeyi's Breakthrough in the image building of the Emerging "Great Female protagonists" in costume dramas takes Dou Yifeng in the Beauty Plot, Zhen Huan in the Legend of Zhen Huan, Wu Zetian in the Empress of China as the main body, and uses Beauvoir's female gender constructionist theory and Judith Butler's gender performance theory to "explore the desire expression and identity construction behind the role building". In addition to the analysis of "Great female drama" itself, the existing studies also pay attention to the psychological level of the audience. As mentioned above, Xu Mingyue's master's thesis "A Study on the Aesthetic Psychology of the Audience of Female Main Plays in the Context of Consumer Culture" studies the aesthetic psychology and forming factors of the audience of "Female main plays" under the social background of rampant consumerism, and draws results such as the pursuit of sensory experience, identification of idol symbols, highlighting the empathy effect, etc. Also from the perspective of social environment, aesthetic object, aesthetic subject to interpret the formation of this aesthetic psychology. The above two aspects basically cover the existing research on female main plays.

However, although these researches are conducted from the aspects of drama and audience psychology, they do not point out that the fundamental reason for the excellent production of drama by female protagonists is the requirement of landscape society.

2.2 Literature review of landscape society theory

The social theory of landscape was proposed in the 20th century by Guy DeBaud, a famous French thinker, in his work Landscape Society published in 1967. French philosopher Jean Baudrillard said that most foreign scholars started their research on landscape social theory from the phenomenon of "landscape", and the research field showed a diversified trend. Through the analysis of landscape images in real life, landscape, media and commodities are linked, triggering people's attention to landscape phenomenon, thinking about the change of social form. After the 1929 economic crisis, mass consumption became the new driving force to stimulate economic

development and the decisive factor to earn profits. Capitalists make use of the ubiquitous advertising in life to realize capital output, so that the visual images become the basis for people's consumption, and then export the consumerist landscape value concept. Deboer analyzed this and pointed out that the external image of the landscape replaced the essence of society. Corresponding to the popularity of "Big female drama" is the use of landscape social theory, relying on sophisticated costume Daoyan to win the TV drama market.

However, these studies have not analyzed domestic female main dramas from the perspective of costume Daoyan landscape, so there is no answer to whether domestic female main dramas highlighting costume Daoyan meet the audience's expectations.

2.3 Problem Raising

To sum up, this paper, starting from the landscape theory, tries to answer the question of why domestic female main dramas increasingly highlight the phenomenon of costume and beauty. Is it true that the higher the female's appearance level is, the more elaborate the costume,the more exquisite the makeup and the more exaggerated the props, the higher the audience's attention will be? What other factors strengthen the audience's attention to domestic female lead dramas?

3. Research methods

3.1 Questionnaire survey method

3.1.1 Hypothesis establishment

Based on the above questions, corresponding hypotheses are proposed here.

H1: The better the figure of the female lead, the higher the frequency of audience watching;

H2: The more delicate the female makeup, the more frequent the audience will watch;

H3: The more exquisite the heroine's clothes, the higher the audience's viewing frequency;

In order to prove the hypothesis, this study adopted the questionnaire survey method, sampled the whole population, and made a questionnaire.

3.1.2 Sampling methods

A total of 187 valid samples were collected in this questionnaire, among which female samples accounted for more than 80% in terms of gender. From the perspective of age, 18-22 year old respondents accounted for the highest proportion, more than 50%; In terms of education, bachelor's degree accounted for the highest proportion, more than 80%.

In terms of the viewing of female dramas, 79.7% of the respondents said they watched 1-3 female dramas a year; 67.35 of the respondents said they watch less than one hour of top female dramas every week; More than 60 percent of respondents watch more than three times a week. Among the female dramas in the survey, Legend of Zhen Huan has the highest viewing rate of 70 percent, followed by Legend of Chu Qiao and Story of Yanxi Palace. More than 76 percent of

respondents said the appearance of the female characters in a major female drama is an important factor influencing their interest in the show.

The study divided the attractiveness of female characters into makeup, body shape, clothing and skin condition. After summing and averaging, a new variable, "makeup of female characters", was generated, which was included in the subsequent statistical analysis. The author found that the average score of respondents for the female number one in the main female drama was 89 points, and the average score for the female character makeup was 3.7 points (out of 5). It can be seen that the respondents give a high evaluation on the love and appearance of the female characters in the main female series they have seen.

To sum up, Pearson correlation analysis found that there was a significant positive correlation between audience's love for female characters in big female series and the frequency of watching big female series ($r>0, P<0.05$). This indicates that the higher the audience's affection for the figure, makeup, clothing and other aspects of the female characters in the main female series, the higher the frequency of watching the main female series. However, there is no significant correlation between audience's evaluation of the appearance level of female characters and their viewing time and frequency of the dramas. No matter whether the audience will have an immersive viewing experience of the main female drama, there is no statistically significant difference in the evaluation and liking of the appearance level of the female characters in the main female drama.

3.2 In-depth interview method

Therefore, according to the data analysis obtained from the questionnaire, we aim at the question "why does appearance level affect the audience's watching of the main female drama superficially, but in fact it is not the evaluation criterion?" And "Why does the degree of makeup affect the viewing frequency and length of viewing? Is it the good attitude of the production crew that makes the audience feel it?" Two questions were asked to interview the interviewees.

(1) Preparation: The interview questions are mainly divided into three parts. The first part mainly involves the basic information of the interviewees, including their gender and age. In the second part, the dimension of the research question is reduced to the interview question. The third part, preparation mainly involves questions that may be dug deeper.

(2) Problems to be avoided (theoretical part to be referred to) : In the process of interviews and research, researchers try to avoid the four-fold ethical problems and deviant behaviors emphasized by scholar Alan Bryman: first, damage to the participants; Second, no use of informed consent license documents or materials; Third, violating the privacy of the study participants; And fourth, deceiving the study participants. And if the interviewees have any unwilling questions or dissatisfaction during the interview, they can keep silent or quit midway. The interview materials that the interviewees stated that they did not want to be published were not included and quoted in this study.

(3) This study conducted a 15-minute semi-structured in-depth interview with 20 interviewees aged 18-25. The interviews were conducted from March 2023 to April 2022. The interviewees first included college students, teachers and other professionals, and second, more research

samples were collected through social meetings. According to the principle of maximum sampling of qualitative research method, all the interview contents were enough to answer the research questions when the 10th respondent was collected, and the collection of samples was closed. The interviewees were different in age, location, growth environment and other aspects, and the degree of homogeneity was low. The interviews were conducted in one-to-one face-to-face interviews. The interview results were arranged into a verbatim manuscript with a total of 10,000 words. The processing of the interview content was completed by myself. See the basic information of interviewees table.

Basic information of interviewees

Serial number	Gender	Age	Occupation
1	male	20	Students
2	female	23	Students
3	male	21	Students
4	male	30	Teachers
5	female	22	Photographer
6	female	24	Students
7	female	28	Teachers
8	male	22	Students
9	female	23	Students
10	female	35	Journalists
11	male	24	Students

4.Research findings and discussion points

When we conducted in-depth interviews on the reasons why the interviewees' "appearance level" and "makeup level" affected the frequency and duration of watching domestic female lead dramas and tried to get answers, we found that the heroine's "appearance level" could be the reason to attract people's attention to this drama in the first place. However, it is the plot that really affects the frequency and duration of subsequent viewing. The reason why makeup affects the viewing frequency and duration of the audience is that the audience can experience the quality of high-quality dramas here. From the answers of the interviewees, the author's ideas have been confirmed.

4.1 Appearance level is no longer a persistent traffic password

Appearance level is no longer the root cause of how often viewers watch and how long they watch. This is because in the landscape society, appearance level is no longer a scarce resource, and a good TV series still attracts the audience with good plot logic and vivid characterization, which is the foothold of a TV series and the key factor to continuously attract the audience.

According to the results of the in-depth interview, the author learned that the idea of watching the drama was generated because of the good appearance level at the beginning. After watching the drama, it was mainly because of the good plot. Therefore, I think the plot is the main factor in

evaluating a drama. (S1)

I have read Menghualu, the beginning is due to the heroine's appearance level. But when I watched it, the story attracted me the most. Legend of Zhen Huan is also based on the story. So the level of appearance will be one of the reasons why I started watching it, but the story will be more important. (S2)

If you know the drama for the first time, you will definitely judge it from the appearance level. However, if the story is good in the later stage, the appearance level problem can be ignored, but the premise is that the story is attractive. (S3)

The level of appearance can be a gateway to traffic for a major female drama, but the key to maintaining, or even increasing, traffic is definitely not the level of appearance of the female characters on the show.

In the landscape society, the selection of appearance level has become a kind of unconscious choice. This is especially reflected in the TV series such as the need for visual processing of the audience environment, appearance level to a certain extent will become the flow entrance to open the viewing market, and the audience is attracted by the appearance level will become the reason for the audience to watch the play. But the audience in the process of watching, the simple appearance level can not meet the needs of the audience to continue to watch. During continuous viewing, audiences will be more attracted by the ups and downs of the plot and enjoy the psychological experience brought by the plot. When immersed in the plot, the audience can even ignore the influence of the appearance level, and then focus on the fate of the characters shaped in the plot. Therefore, in the landscape society, the general improvement of appearance level makes it no longer a scarce resource, but no longer a factor that determines the viewing frequency and viewing duration of the TV drama market audience.

4.2 The degree of makeup will meet the deeper needs of TV series audiences

Compared with the level of appearance, the performance of makeup requirements and TV drama plot trend, the personality of the character, image paste progress is higher, more detailed.

According to the in-depth interview, the author learned that if the makeup level is not very good, the first episode will definitely leave me with the impression that the drama has no innovative points and the attitude of a good drama, which will affect my personal aesthetic and initial experience of watching the movie. (S4)

The level of beauty of the Fu Hua Tao will appeal especially to female audiences. This is the most direct reflection of the production level of a drama. Whether you want to present a good story seriously or follow the trend to seize the opportunity to cash in dividends can be reflected through the layout of the scene, the use of costumes for the endings of different characters and so on. (S5)

Good makeup will reflect the attention and attention of the crew to this work, rather than some ordinary small network dramas simply to traffic and click perfunctory modeling. Good makeup can improve our audience's sense of experience, improve our aesthetic ability and appreciation. (S6)

In the eyes of the audience, the exquisite degree of makeup of domestic female lead dramas

not only satisfies the psychological needs of the audience to continue to watch the drama visually, but also reflects the attention of the crew and the excellent quality of the series. Therefore, the degree of makeup is the landscape society, which not only meets the audience's visual pursuit but also meets their needs of quality experience. Whether a domestic female lead drama is really high quality, there must be an audience's unexpected fine work in the degree of makeup.

In addition, makeup also carries a certain social responsibility. Take "Menghualu" as an example, this TV series in the production of makeup degree, reference to the Song Dynasty story background, around the popular aesthetic culture in the Song Dynasty on the production of fine carved, in the choice of dress color are fresh and elegant color, no high saturation color, the Song Dynasty people's pursuit of natural, natural and simple aesthetic thoughts reflected incisive and vividly. Attractive, at the same time popularized the aesthetic culture of the Song Dynasty for the audience.

5. Summary and reflection

Under the background of landscape society, the visual needs pursued by the audience when watching TV series will be more in-depth and detailed, and this need will adjust and adapt around the core story experience pursued by the audience when watching TV series. How to match the female character's makeup degree with the plot advancement, and how to continuously optimize and refine the makeup degree in the production, so as to meet the visual needs of the audience to the greatest extent, will be the next key issue of domestic female main drama to attract and improve the audience's viewing frequency and length.

5.1 Deal with the details of makeup to avoid uniformity

Detail depiction of the details in the visual arts of TV dramas can touch the softest part of the audience's heart, causing their identification and resonance. Therefore, starting from the details, the producers of film and television programs can make different designs on the same makeup level in different periods of the transformation of each female character, so as to reflect the changes of the female character along with the growth period. In different situations, women's makeup will show different states. For example, when working overtime and staying up late is unavoidable during career progression, a woman's skin may not be as polished and neat as it is on a daily basis. Therefore, the makeup can be broken through from such details, and the audience can feel the intention of the production crew in the details, so as to increase the frequency and duration of audience watching.

5.2 Improve the adaptation of costumes and scenes

The atmosphere of story scenes in film and television works requires not only the promotion of characters in body performance, language lines and other aspects, but also the mutual change of clothing and the sense of modeling can effectively guide the audience to follow the progress of

the story plot in the film and television works, and also render the scene atmosphere of the story. In film and television plays, clothing modeling is often used to integrate with the film background or its space scene, the purpose is to heighten the beauty of the scene through the shape, style and color of clothing, so that the audience can have an immersive story experience. In the future, at the production level of program content, producers can extend the audience's viewing time by improving the compatibility of female clothing with the visual space of film and television and the development of the story.

6. Shortcomings of research

In this study, there is no targeted classification of the audience, but an analysis and summary of all the questionnaire feedback. In the future, we can continue to refine the audiences, divide them according to gender, age and occupation, and improve the visual processing of domestic female main dramas in a targeted way, so as to comprehensively improve the viewing frequency and viewing duration of domestic female main dramas, break through the share of domestic female main dramas in the Chinese TV drama market, and make them become mainstream dramas rather than just a niche viewing market.

This interview did not contact the producers of big female plays, so we did not get the cutting-edge information. At present, we do not know how the domestic big female play market will develop in the future in terms of landscape theory application and how to occupy the mainstream market.

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