A Brief Analysis of the Literariness of Film and Television Script Creation

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Abstract: In the current era of vigorous development of film and television industry, the number of film and television works is a blowout growth. However, there are many problems behind the boom. The root of the problem lies in the lack of literature in the creation of film and television scripts. The in-depth research on the literariness of film and television art, especially film and television script creation, occupies a crucial position in the field of contemporary film and television research. This research dimension not only provides a key perspective for understanding the core value of literary literacy in film and television script writing, but also promotes the expansion and deepening of the concept of literature on a broader level. This study demonstrates the literary nature of the script from the aspects of narrative expression, literary thinking, and the dialogue in the script. In the same way, in the process of enhancing the literary quality of scriptwriting, these three points are also of vital importance.

Keywords: Screenplay Writing, Literary Quality, Film and Television Screenplay

1. Introduction

Film and television are comprehensive art forms which combine literary, dramatic, musical and graphic aspects. The most fundamental aspect of these features is the literary nature of film and television works [1]. In essence, literary elements are the foundation of the whole film and television creation. And the most literariness is reflected in the film and television script, which runs through the whole structure of the film and television art works. Studying the literariness of film and television scripts is helpful to enrich the theoretical system of film and television scripts [2]. As an interdisciplinary subject, the theoretical research of film and television literature is still being perfected. Based on the main structure and form of film and television script creation, this paper summarizes that paying attention to the literariness of film and television script creation can effectively improve the quality of film and television works, create vivid three-dimensional characters, construct fascinating and logical plot structure, and create an infectious artistic atmosphere so as to promote the research on the literariness of film and television script creation [3].

2. The literary nature of screenplays

2.1. The literary expression of narrative structure in screenplays

In the narrative structure of film and television scripts, literariness occupies an important position. Text is the basis of scriptwriting, which reflects the creator's literary accomplishment. Narrative in film and television works usually refers to the method of telling a story. The telling of a story in the most engaging way possible at a given time or space [2]. Different ways of telling a story determine different forms of structure. The classic mode of dramatic structure is also the "grand plot mode."[4] The "grand plot structure" mentioned by Robert McKee in *The Story* is a narrative model adopted by many mainstream films at home and abroad, which follows the traditional classic Hollywood narrative model and adopts a "three-act" dramatic structure. Usually, the story is divided into three parts: beginning, middle, and end, which are often referred to as "establishment," "confrontation" and "ending." This structure has a clear narrative vein, which can effectively guide the audience's emotions and attention focus, ensuring the story maintains robust logic and coherence. By setting up a series of plot points and conflicts, it creates a tense and exciting plot development so that the audience can always keep the attention of the story development.

The core of a Hollywood narrative structure script, like other scripts, is to express imagination through words. Its clear logic follows cause and effect, contains intuitive beauty, meets people's common pursuit of order, and is essentially the embodiment of an ideal world view [2]. The structure is mainly presented through six elements:

1. Conflict: The conflict between action and counteraction between the protagonist and the opponent is the core driving force of the story.
2. Procedural: The conflict escalates gradually, there are close causal links between scenes, and the story is coherent and logical.
3. Climax: A concentrated flashpoint of conflict and conflict, where tension and drama reach their peak.
4. Ending: Having a philosophical generality, elevating the story and provoking the audience to think about reality.
5. Integrity: The story is coherent as a whole, the characters have reasonable motives, and the narrative is linear.
6. Cross clues: the story and emotional clues interweave, enrich the level, enhance the appeal, and enhance the immersion of viewing.

The six elements are shown in a literary way, and the structure level is clear so as to better narrate the story with pictures.

For example, in the film *"Titanic,"* in the first act of the film, the luxurious style of Titanic is presented in an all-around way through rich audio-visual language. At the same time, the different life backgrounds of the male and female protagonists and the pursuit of their inner goals are described in detail so that the audience has formed a deep impression on the character image and story background of the protagonists. Entering the stage of "confrontation" in the second act, the love relationship between the male and female protagonists encounters powerful obstacles in many aspects such as the heroine's mother and fiance, which are like insurmountable barriers between them. At the same time, the Titanic hits an iceberg, and all kinds of dangers and crises come one after another, causing the tension of the story to rise sharply to a peak. In the third act, the finale, the Titanic sinks so tragically that the hero makes a self-sacrificing choice to protect the heroine. This plot has a strong emotional impact on the audience, making the film a classic in film history. From a narrative point of view, it also fully demonstrates the powerful efficacy of "big plot structure" in shaping the story and touching the audience.

2.2. Character dialogue as the foundation of the literary nature of screenplays

When it comes to film and television scripts, the most common is the dialogue of the characters. As the cornerstone of the literary nature of a script, character dialogue bears multiple missions such as shaping characters, advancing the plot, and conveying themes. Through dialogues full of individuality and depth, a script can materialize abstract literary concepts, enabling the audience to perceive the souls of the characters and experience the charm of the story through the lines. In this way, a vivid and compelling dramatic world can be constructed. Syd Field has little to say about script dialogue in his book, but Robert McKee's Dialogue: The Art of Speech Act on Word, Stage, and Screen talks at length about the importance of dialogue in screenwriting.

In English, the word dialogue comes from two Greek terms. "dia-" means "what went through" and "legein" means "what to say." Translated into English as a compound, it is "through words," an action done by words rather than by deeds. In his book Dialogue: Speech Act on Paper, Stage, and Screen, Robert McKee expands the definition of dialogue to include any words spoken by a character. This is because, in essence, dialogue is an action taken by a character to express emotional content and satisfy hopes or desires based on words, whether to himself, others, or the reader/viewer [5].

In the field of literary creation, dialogue, by virtue of its abstract nature, relies heavily on the reader's imagination to construct the situation in which the characters speak. In literary works, many characters' speaking styles, tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures, volume and other details need to be described and imagined in the mind of readers, so as to achieve effective distinction between characters. Some writers incorporate dialect elements into their novels, which challenges readers' imagination and comprehension. In Jia Pingwa's *Qin Qiang Opera*, for example, Xia Feng says to Bai Xue, "*Well, I see that our village has changed a lot in recent years, but some things are getting harder and harder to understand.*" The clever use of dialect clearly shows the local customs and the simple character of the characters in southern Shaanxi. In Eileen Chang's novels, the dialogue is delicate and graceful [6]. For example, Bai Tasu said when dealing with Fan Liuyuan, "*Your highest ideal is a woman who is pure and pure and full of titillate. Pure and pure, is for others. Tease, is to yourself. If I was a thoroughly nice woman, you wouldn't even notice me!*" Through such dialogue, Eileen Chang captures the complex emotions and subtle psychology of her characters. Literary dialogues exist in the form of pure symbols, and readers mainly rely on reading to understand the connotation of the works, which is closely related to their literary accomplishment. First interpret the text, turn it into personal understanding, and then use imagination to match it with sounds and pictures. This process is completely completed by the reader independently, and there is no secondary communication link in the middle, so different readers tend to have different imagination and understanding of the same content. Compared with literary dialogue, the dialogue writing in film and television works is more oriented to life and colloquial, which can serve the plot, promote the plot quickly and fit the overall style [5]. For example, in the television series *Friends*, Chandler often asks Joey, "*How do you do in?*" "*To show the relaxed atmosphere between the characters and make it easy for viewers to understand.*" In *Titanic*, Jack says to Rose, "*You jump, I jump.*" The firm tone matches the tense scene to convey the emotion of never giving up; in *Zootopia*, Judy tells Nick that "*mistakes are inevitable in life,*" which not only fits the dream theme of the film but also promotes the relationship development of the characters.

The dialogue in the script is based on the words to show the picture, which also translates the written script into the language of the screen. Its language is carefully crafted, the words are precise and expressive, the sentence structure is clever, and the sense of rhythm and hierarchy is added [7]. In the characterization, the language clearly reflects the character's personality and reveals subtle changes in relationships between characters. From the perspective of theme expression, it can not

only sublimate the theme and trigger deep thinking but also use symbolism, metaphor, and other literary techniques to imply the theme and enrich the connotation.

2.3. The audio-visual language of film and television based on literary expression

Every film and television work contains unique narrative skills. The film and television language system, based on the classification criteria of film and television narration, includes three different language levels: film and television modeling, film and television ontology, and film and television structure. The presentation of visual language is usually inseparable from literary thinking [8]. Using words to shape the main body of the whole story, and then based on the script, the picture of the film and television works can be shot [9].

Film and television structure language layer shows film and television language in blocks, mainly emphasizing how the form shapes the content, the content is the combination of theme and treatment, and pays attention to the interdependent relationship between form and content [10]. The content of film and television works is born on the basis of scripts. In the process of transforming literary script into screen language, the mode of thinking and the profound heritage of literature play an important role [7]. Screen language is by no means isolated, and it contains the director's creative intention and profound ideological connotation behind it. In order to show the creative intention of screen language incisively and vividly, and highlight the high level of artistic expression, it is critical to have the literary expression of emotional and poetic beauty. This kind of literary expression can inject the soul into the screen language so that while conveying the story, it can arouse the audience's strong resonance in the emotional and aesthetic level, and then enhance the artistic charm of the film in an all-round way.

The language system of film and television covers many important elements, such as picture, sound, and editing, and is closely connected with the narrative structure of classic drama. For example, the picture language -- The picture language of the opening scene of *The Godfather* is very exquisite [10]. The oblique light and contrast of light and shadow in the darkened room create a mysterious and depressing atmosphere, suggesting the darkness of the Mafia world. The panorama shows the people who ask for help in the room, highlighting the godfather's core position, and then the medium and close-up depict the characters' expressions, such as the sadness and eagerness of the father who asks for help. *The godfather's* sharp black suit symbolizes his family's authority. Sound language - The piano scene from *The Legend of 1900* is an example of the use of sound language. The sound mainly consists of piano playing, characters shouting, and environmental sound effects. 1900 plays the piano with a jazz master. The piano sounds change with the plot, and the contrast between soothing and exciting styles promotes it. The characters' shouts enhance the sense of tension, the ship's body shaking, the wind howling, and other environmental sound effects, so that the audience as if in a cruise ship, enhance the performance appeal. Editing language - *Inception* features multiple dream switches. The film uses rapid editing and frequent transitions between dream levels. From the rainy street in the first dream to the second dream scene, the use of revolving doors, mirror reflection, and other transitions blur the boundary between reality and dream. A large number of cross-cutting clips simultaneously show the actions of different dream characters, creating a tense atmosphere and allowing the audience to take adventures together.

3. Conclusion

In general, in all kinds of research literature, screenplay writing is another presentation of literary creation in the film and television industry. Film and television scripts are based on literary scripts, which are closely related to the creator's literary literacy and film and television artistic literacy. From the perspective of practical significance, the study of literariness in the creation of film and television

scripts helps film and television creators to better use literary skills in the creation process, improve the quality of scripts, and further promote the overall level of film and television art. Simultaneously, this research holds significant value for the audience.   It can guide the audience to interpret the film and television works from the perspective of literary appreciation, and improve the audience's aesthetic ability and cultural accomplishment. Literary research in film and television scripts expands traditional boundaries, integrating literature with dynamic imagery. This broadens literary understanding and enhances societal literary literacy. Thus, filmmakers should actively refine script literariness to enrich artistic and cultural value.

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