



Exploration of “Authenticity” in the Subject of Family Education — Take the Domestic TV Drama “Little Happiness” as an Example

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Abstract: The authenticity of TV drama has always been the goal pursued by script creators in film and television creation. With the continuous development and innovation of China's TV drama industry, the subject matter of TV dramas has shown a diversified development trend. However, under the influence of commercialisation and other factors, some TV series with funny, outrageous contents and wrong value orientation have appeared in the TV series market, which has brought a bad atmosphere to the development of TV series market. In the face of gradually increasing social pressure, TV dramas that can reflect social reality, promote viewers to find resonance, disseminate correct social values and concepts, and maximise the closeness to the truth are the ones worth savouring and promoting. As a masterpiece of family education drama, 'Little Happiness' has high artistic value as its content is close to reality, society and the public, thus resonating with the audience and becoming one of the popular dramas in 2019. This paper takes 'Little Happiness' TV drama as the research object, analyzes the plot and content of 'Little Happiness' from the perspective of 'authenticity', and points out the problems of insufficiently profound reflection of reality, homogenization of plot settings, and single type of character settings while affirming the high quality of TV drama, and then puts forward countermeasure suggestions for family education TV dramas in hopes of improving the quality of TV drama. And then put forward countermeasure suggestions for family education TV dramas, hoping to play a reference for the development of this kind of subject matter.

Keywords: 'Little Happiness', educational concept, authenticity, TV drama development

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of Internet technology, the emergence of video platforms not only breaks the geographical boundaries of TV drama broadcasting, but also greatly improves the audience's convenience of watching dramas. The market of TV dramas has been expanded unprecedentedly in this context. In recent years, emerging themes such as 'cross-country dramas' and 'court dramas' have emerged in an endless stream, triggering wave after wave of ratings boom. At the same time, 'family education dramas' have also won the hearts of viewers with their close-to-reality and heart-touching features. Family education dramas such as 'Tiger Mom, Cat Dad' and 'Little Separation', etc., have shown the confusion and exploration of contemporary families in education and parent-child relationship through delicate portrayal, which has caused extensive social resonance. In this paper, the popular family education drama Little Happiness in 2019 is selected as the object of study, although Little Happiness, as an outstanding representative of the family education genre, is highly praised for its close-to-reality plot and vivid characterisation. However, even so, this work still has some shortcomings, such as the lack of deep reflection of reality, homogenisation of plot settings and single character type. From the perspective of 'authenticity', this paper will discuss the expression of artistic authenticity in 'Little Happiness' and put forward suggestions for improvement, with a view to providing a reference for the development of similar dramas in the future. By analysing the artistic authenticity of Little Happiness and the sociological meaning behind it, we hope to inspire the artistic creation of family education TV dramas, so that they can better serve the audience and convey positive social energy.

2. Overview of the TV drama Little Happiness

2.1 Introduction to Little Happiness

'Little Happiness' is a family education TV series focusing on parent-child relationship and education concept, family education drama aims to reflect the current social reality, mainly focusing on parents and children's life stories. 2019, the work "Little Happiness" starring Tao Hong, Hai Qing, Huang Lei, Sha Yi and other famous actors was officially aired, and the work uses the perspective of the Fang Yuan couple to tell a series of stories about three groups of families facing the children's third year of high school, a real life story. The series of stories happened in the third year of high school, which

realistically embodies the hard work of different families in the face of China's number one examination 'college entrance examination' under the current huge social pressure, and also shows the current situation of family education in China.

2.2 Analysis of the artistic expression techniques of the TV drama Little Happiness

2.2.1 Symbolic Characterisation

The content of artistic expression in TV dramas is intangible, and most of them need actors to convey the content with the aid of body movements or facial expressions, so symbolic characterisation is an important part of the artistic expression process.[1] Actors in TV dramas with family education theme are the expressers of artistic expression activities, who convert their understanding of family life or parent-child relationship into symbolic characters and then pass them to the audience. The audience understands the content of artistic expression through the creators' characters' behaviour and language. Family education drama is a reflection of the realities of education and parent-child relationships in China today, so it is very important that the characters are portrayed in accordance with the social reality, and only when the characters in the drama have distinctive character traits and are able to restore the realities of family life in a more realistic way, can the audience have a full understanding of the characters, which increases the authenticity of the drama and triggers the audience's resonance and reflection.[2]

For example, in 'Little Happiness', the character of Tong Wenjie, played by Hai Qing, is labelled as a 'strong woman and tiger mother', which represents the contemporary women who need to balance career and family, and who have to bear great pressure on their own careers while taking care of their families and children. In the face of the critical period of the child's college entrance examination, they have to give up part of their career to return the focus to the child, their own strong character and the desire to win make life, treating the child's education with a kind of hateful mentality. In the process of children's learning and growth, they play the role of 'tiger mother' to educate and accompany the growth of children. In contrast, Fang Yifan, the son of the Tiger Mother, represents a group of children who are naturally optimistic and take things as they come, and do not attach much importance to their studies. However, under the pressure of his 'tiger mother', Fang Yifan is forced to 'carry the weight' of his studies over and over again, which puts a lot of pressure on his mind. In today's family relationship, this kind of group mother-child relationship is still a lot, the mother for the child's hard work, the child in the face of the mother's care and love, even if the study encountered difficulties, can only 'rise to the occasion', do not dare to express their own ideas, so in the middle of the residence of this kind of mother-child relationship, a true reflection of some of the current situation of parent-child relationship.

2.2.2 Plot development with 'emotion' as the main focus

Family education TV dramas use 'truth' as the main artistic method, by setting up confrontation and conflict between parents and children in TV dramas, restoring the social reality, stimulating and causing the audience to reflect, and then triggering emotional resonance, and finally realising the topic dissemination and artistic sublimation. Therefore, the plot of TV dramas on the subject of family education needs to be tightly focused on 'emotion' and 'truth'. [3] In reality, affection is the emotional bond between parents and children, and is also the lubricant for dealing with problems between parents and children. Song Qian and Qiao Yingzi in 'Little Happiness' are typical representatives. Song Qian, as a controlling person, only cares about her daughter's study, but ignores her real dream, and suppresses her daughter again and again, which leads to her daughter's depression, and the mother-daughter relationship eventually breaks down. After Qiao Yingzi's choice to commit suicide, Song Qian woke up in time to fulfil her daughter's dream, and mother and daughter were reconciled. The contradictions embodied in the play, such as parents and children's dreams running counter to each other, mothers' extreme control over their daughters, and the differences in the expression of emotions between mothers and daughters, are all closely centred on "affection", and are ultimately resolved one by one by using "affection" as a link. Emotion' is the core element of the story of "Little Happiness".

2.2.3 Transmission of the value of 'peace is the most precious'

Most domestic TV dramas have a happy ending, and the trend of artistic expression is closer to 'peace'. As an ideology, 'harmony' has always been an important element in the development of Chinese culture, and the successful artistic ending of the drama also echoes the ideological core of Chinese culture, which is 'harmony is the most precious' and 'all things prosper in a harmonious family'. 'The artful and successful ending of the play also echoes the ideological core of Chinese culture, which is the inheritance and embodiment of Chinese culture.[4] In A Little Happiness, although Fang Yifan does not want to make progress at first, he strives to achieve his dream after he has clarified his goal; Qiao Yingzi reconciles with her mother and gets into her dream university; Ji Yangyang gradually understands the pain of her parents and becomes more obedient, accompanying her parents; the parents and children of the three groups of families all get the most happy ending.

To sum up, whether it is the symbolic character traits, the 'emotion' based story expression. Or the transmission of the value of 'peace is precious', all of them need to be close to reality, the emotional needs of the masses and universal values, in

order to arouse the audience's resonance, achieve artistic sublimation, and ultimately obtain the success of the communication of the TV drama. It is thus clear that 'artistic truth' is an indispensable core element in the creation of quality TV dramas, and is also the key to their success. Second, the 'authenticity' of the TV series 'Little Happiness'.

3. The 'authenticity' of the TV series 'Little Happiness'

3.1 Definition and Characteristics of Artistic Authenticity

3.1.1 Definition of artistic authenticity

Artistic authenticity is the artistic image created by artists based on the realities of life through artistic processing, refining, and refracting certain phenomena and laws in real life. [5] 'Authenticity' refers to the extent to which the background of the storyline or the image of the characters in the art work fits with real life, which is an important element of artistic expression. Authenticity is the key to artistic creation, and only authentic works can make the audience have a sense of identity. But this 'artistic authenticity' is not limited to social reality, as long as it is in line with the general perception of society, with a realistic basis of 'authenticity' can be used as a source of high-quality content creation.

3.1.2 Characteristics of Artistic Truth

3.1.2.1 Assumptions of Artistic Scenarios

The assumption of artistic scenario is the external characteristic of artistic truth. [6] It is impossible for art to completely reproduce real life, and artists need to refine, generalise and recreate on the basis of real life according to their own knowledge and perception. Assumptive reality is a more common form of artistic reality, but there are certain conditions required, first of all, the art itself must be complete and unified, in line with the actual social situation of things logical and emotional thinking, which can also obtain a higher degree of acceptance by the audience. For example, in the once-hot TV series 'Luangya List', the entire TV series plot is based on the novel created by the virtual history of the plot to unfold, but the plot of the palace fight set up in line with the general perception of the community, so although the artistic situation is hypothetical, but also be able to cause the audience to resonate with the audience and let the audience to increase the sense of freshness, to further improve the audience and the TV series between the viscosity.

3.1.2.2 Artistic authenticity is more subjective authenticity and poetic arts

Science is the object of study as an absolute object outside the subject to view, but literature focuses more on human perception of life and aesthetic and subjective position to observe the objective world, the perception of the objective world, with a subjective authenticity, and often through metaphors, hyperbole, anthropomorphism, and other subjective art techniques to create a poetic art beyond the scientific reality. Therefore, art works are different from scientific works in that most of the art works aim to stimulate people's emotions, and 'poetic art' is an important part of artistic reality.

3.2 'Authenticity' in the Mirror Image of TV Drama

3.2.1 Multiple perspectives of affectionate relationship

The relationship between parents and children is the closest part of the family relationship, and to some extent, parents and children are the closest to each other. [7] In family education dramas, the relationship between parents and children is the focus of portrayal and the basis for plot development, but Little Happiness adopts a diversified combination of characters to portray the relationship in detail from multiple perspectives.

Tong Wenjie and Liu Jing are two contrasting characters. Tong Wenjie is strong and strict, and has a tough way of communicating with his children. Liu Jing has a gentle character, communicate with the child more calmly, calmly and wisely, it is easier to get the child's trust, closer to the parents and the child's spiritual distance, to eliminate barriers and must. Ji Yang Yang's father and Fang Yuan is a typical 'tiger father + cat father' combination. Although Ji Yang Yang's father loves his son, he can't express his love for him, and he rarely communicates with his child, and the distance between him and his child seems to be an unbridgeable 'chasm'. Fang Yuan has a gentle temperament and is more understanding and protective of the child, making it easier for the child to get along with him. The drama expresses the current situation of Chinese families' personal relationships through the portrayal of two parents with contrasting personalities.

The conflict of education is an important issue in real families. In the drama, Mr and Mrs Dialect have very different personalities, and each of them has their own ideas about children's education, and there are many educational disagreements in the process of children's education. Song Qian Qiao Weidong child education conflict is more prominent, Song Qian too much interference in the child's life, although Qiao Weidong support the dream but have no right to speak, so the child is more depressing.

3.2.2 The Sorrowfulness and Helplessness of Social Life

As a branch of family ethical dramas, family education dramas are also full of secular flavour, and the small things in

the couple's life are also magnified in the dramas. In *A Little Happiness*, in order to pay for his son's acting lessons, Fang Yuan searches for a job, driving a taxi, working as a voice actor, and even working as a delivery boy. This episode portrays the bitterness and helplessness of social life. In real life, some parents may have to work even harder in order for their children to achieve academic success and have a bright future. As a result, the film resonates with real-life parents, and the plot is realistic, giving the audience a greater sense of immersion.

4. The inadequacy of the artistic real expression of the TV series 'Little Happiness.'

4.1 Insufficiently specific and profound reflection of reality

Artists believe that 'authenticity' in art is inseparable from reality. As a kind of artistic creation, TV drama should take materials from life, and so should TV drama with family education theme: the reflection of parent-child relationship, education concept, and husband and wife relationship should be from real life, and the characters should be deeply analysed. However, Chinese TV dramas on family education focus more on promoting the development of the plot by triggering conflicts. [8]For example, the development of the story of the three groups of families in 'Little Happiness' mostly focuses on the quarrels between parents and children, and the conflicts between parents lead to problems, but most of the TV dramas focus on the surface of the criticism, and do not carry out a profound analysis, such as simply think that the conflict between parents and children is due to the differences in the expression of emotions, and ignores the differences in the worldviews, outlook on life, and values hidden behind the contradictions. In addition, a series of TV dramas on the subject of family education, such as 'Little Separation', 'Little Happiness' and 'Teenage Pie', are all centred on intensifying conflicts, which has led to domestic family education dramas falling into the fixed pattern of 'antagonistic conflicts', whereby the parents and their children have to go through a 'major event' in order to have a conflict. Between parents and children must be through the occurrence of 'major events', in order to appear the parent-child relationship of the turn, thinking limitations make the storyline into the mass, lose attraction.

4.2 Plot setting tends to be homogenised

In recent years, there are more and more domestic educational drama episodes, all of which are a series of difficulties and dilemmas encountered by the parents in the drama on the issue of educating their children, which is exactly the same dilemma faced by middle-aged parents nowadays. As educational dramas have gained more and more attention due to their resonance with parents and children, there are more and more episodes with similar themes, which has led to a bottleneck in this genre of TV dramas. For TV dramas, the plot is the centre of gravity, and the charisma of the characters is what adds colour to the drama. To make the drama more appealing and dramatic, scriptwriters tend to focus on the characterisation of the characters as well as the plotting of the drama, and tend to converge on the plots of similarly successful dramas, which leads to homogenisation of the plotting. Along with the increasing popularity of family education dramas, these dramas have fallen into a fixed pattern in plot setting and characterisation.

4.3 Single type of characterisation

In recent years, and 'Little Happiness' theme of similar dramas 'Little Farewell', 'Teenagers', 'Tiger Mom and Cat Dad' and so on are representative of the modern city as the background of the family, urban white-collar workers as the image of professional parents, the children in the drama character construction is also more similar, rarely to the rural groups as the object. At the same time, for the character setting, the age of the parents are mostly for the post-80s group, causing more audience resonance, but the same age parents can also have different social backgrounds, occupations, etc., family education dramas in the character setting is too single, the background is highly similar to the portrayal of the character image of most of the middle class-based, reflecting the limitations of the social phenomenon, reflecting the reality of the lack of a comprehensive.

5. Suggestions and Strategies for Enhancing the Artistic Authenticity of Domestic TV Dramas

5.1 Sublimation of themes close to mainstream values

At present, domestic education drama series are becoming more and more 'civilianised'. Most of the TV dramas on family education mainly focus on the post-80s parents' group and pay attention to the life of ordinary people. However, there are also misunderstandings in the expression of the story, such as in order to fully reflect the life, resulting in the narrative is too trivial, most of the contradictions to promote the development of the plot, and even some of the TV dramas are

not in line with the mainstream values of the current society. This paper argues that domestic educational dramas are very important for the transmission of mainstream social values. An excellent education drama should reflect the reality, but it is important to sublimate the theme to promote the audience to have a deeper thinking. If this kind of TV drama in China wants to get a longer development, it should start from two perspectives of reality and thought: in the grounded performance and philosophical lines, it shows 'common people'; in the characters' behaviour, it shows the mainstream values of the society, and both of them are better combined in order to transmit the mainstream values of the society to the audience with real storytelling expression.

5.2 Innovation of script writing and filming techniques

Character portrayal is the key to the success of a TV drama, and the plot setting of the script is also one of the factors determining the success. It is crucial to polish and innovate the script in depth, and this paper believes that more efforts should be put into the script plot setting, and the text of the TV series should be carefully thought out, and only by polishing the script in a more profound, fine and comprehensive manner, can it show a strong attraction of the plot and gain a large number of viewers' favourite. At the same time should also be more extensive in the selection of subject matter. Currently, almost all of the educational dramas are urban themes, reflecting the situation of young parents in urban areas, with a high degree of bias, so it is particularly important to expand the breadth of themes. If conditions permit, the main characters can be put into other backgrounds, such as rural groups, single parent groups, groups of left-behind children, etc., to get rid of similar themes and plot settings on the imitation, to achieve script innovation, so that the development of this type of subject matter to make new breakthroughs.

In addition, the filming technique is also very important to the script. First of all, filming techniques should pay more attention to the capture of details, especially focusing on the details of the theme of the script.[9] Details are the key factor in determining the final quality of the script, and through the presentation of details, while reflecting the central content of the script, it is also conducive to enhancing the overall shooting effect. Secondly, should pay attention to the application of close-up shots, to fully demonstrate the details, the use of close-up shots is very important, scientific and reasonable use of close-up shots can enhance the audience's sense of empathy, so the script filming staff should be sublimated from a variety of perspectives of the close-up shot shooting skills, to ensure that the maximum extent of the presentation of the details of the script.

5.3 Building a multi-dimensional real world and three-dimensional character image

First of all, the drama script reaction and setting is the key. Script construction is to present a rich world for the audience. Therefore, this paper argues that whether in scriptwriting or character line creation, a more realistic 'world' should be diversified. For the setting of the plot, the character lines, for the characters to highlight the ideas should be multi-level display. In this way, the script is more full at the same time, the character image is also more rich, the creation of the script world is also more real.

Secondly, the characterisation is the soul of the play, and it is especially crucial to create more three-dimensional characters to show the theme of the play, which can portray more three-dimensional characters from the following points: Firstly, the characterisation originates from reality. The life of characters in theatre works should be based on reality, which comes from the intricate relationships and conflicts between people, and the characters will lose their realism if they are separated from such conflicts. The relationship between the character and the surrounding environment is particularly important, determining the character connotation of the display of diversity, character portrayal is also more varied, but any kind of character needs to be derived from reality, with sufficient basis. Second, the character of emotional penetration. Character portrayal is never a mechanical imitation or copy, script writers should penetrate their own ideals, feelings and aesthetics into the character of the play, to promote the character on the screen has an infectious character. Scriptwriters only will their own perception of life and thinking and the characters in the play like penetration and integration, the character portrayed more vitality. Third, the unity of character and emotion. The unity of character and emotion is the key to sublimation of the character image, character from the reality, but also the emotion of life into it, in the infectious at the same time to bring revelation to people. Character is of course rich, but it should also be unified, to create a unified and three-dimensional character image is the core content of the characterisation of the script.

6. Conclusion

Taking the representative episode of 'Little Happiness' as an example, this paper studies the embodiment of artistic authenticity in this type of TV drama, and finds that there are still deficiencies, such as insufficiently deep reflection of reality, homogenisation of the plot, and a single type of character set-up, and so on. Based on this, this paper puts forward

specific suggestions for improvement, including closer to the mainstream values of society in scriptwriting to achieve theme sublimation, making efforts in script polishing to innovate filming techniques and broaden the scope of subject matter, as well as constructing a more realistic world in a multi-dimensional way to portray three-dimensional characters. With the development and change of society, if family education dramas are to continue to gain the recognition of the audience, they need to constantly adapt to the new social needs, deepen the excavation of the real problems, enrich the characters and expand the background of the story, so as to create works that are more close to the reality and touch the hearts of the people. It is hoped that the research in this paper can provide useful references for the development of this kind of subject matter in China, and promote family education TV dramas to go farther on the road of artistic authenticity, so as to show a richer and more diversified social picture in the future, and to continue to lead the innovative trend of the TV drama market.

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