



# The Diverse Spatial Narratives of Women Directors' Films since the New Century

Pu Zhou

<sup>1</sup>School of Journalism and Media, Zhoukou Normal University, Zhoukou, Henan, China.

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Arts, Cheongju University, Cheongju, Chungcheong-buk do, South Korea.

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**Corresponding author:** Pu Zhou, School of Journalism and Media, Zhoukou Normal University, Zhoukou, Henan, China; Faculty of Arts, Cheongju University, Cheongju, Chungcheong-buk do, South Korea.

## Abstract

Since the beginning of the new century, female directors have received increasing attention in the viewers' field of vision, and have become a bright landscape in the constant test of film works practice. In terms of the concept of spatial narration in film, it mainly refers to the activities of the characters in the film with the help of natural or artificially constructed space under the director's arrangement and guidance, in other words, all spatial perspectives are presented in the development of the film plot. Especially in today's increasing status of female directors, their works have a reasonable integration of spatial narrative with a unique female perspective, and among them, the space inside the scene, the space outside the scene and the imaginary space in the mind are the most frequently existed. Therefore, in this paper, the above three are the main objects of research and analysis, and the spatial narrative of female directors' films in the new century is explored in the hope that it can contribute to the development of China's film industry.

## Keywords

New century, female director, film, diversity, spatial narrative

## 1. Definition of the concept of new century female directors

In the process of this paper, the so-called new century female directors mentioned simply refer to the new female directors with high creative talent. As female directors in the new century, they have been educated in film and television and have gained a place in the film market with great success. In addition, compared with male directors, female directors in the new century are more able to show their own female perspectives in their works, thus attaching strong female characteristics to the themes, perspectives and expressions of the narratives. After a series of investigation, analysis and screening, the main representatives of female directors in the new century are Li Yu, Xu Jinglei, Li Xiaoyu, Xue Xiaolu, Jin Yimeng and others. From this, we can make the following conclusions: the growth and rise of the group of female directors in the new century has not only injected new strength and blood into the development of China's film career, but also provided support for the growth of the group of female directors in films worldwide (Duan Tingting, 2013).

## 2. Diverse Spatial Narratives of Women Directors' Films since the New Century

### 2.1 Exploring the expansiveness of intra-scene space

Noel Birch wrote in his book *Theory of Film Practice* that in order to understand the space of film, it must be seen as a thing that includes two different spaces, namely the space inside the frame and the space outside the frame, and such a division of space is both reasonable and desirable for film. In addition, there are others such as Ya-Aumont who named these two types of space as "inside the frame" and "outside the frame (Noel Burch, 1992)". In general, for cinemato-

graphy, whether it is the space shown inside the camera or the external space not shown in the camera, from the viewpoint of the audience, it must not only conform to the reality of social life, but also make the connection between the plot of the film and television more smooth, and thus show the audience the differences in time, season, weather, climate, and ethnicity, so as to provide the environment and atmosphere to support the shaping of the characters in the film. The above discussion shows that the film's plot has to be smoothly connected, thus showing the time, season, weather, climate, and ethnicity to the audience, so as to provide the environment and atmosphere for the characterization of the film.

Through the above discussion, we can define the space within the scene as the support for the plot and development of the film, and the main space for the characters in the film to move around. In the works of these female directors, the intra-scene space is no longer a small territory, a small space or a small area, but a small space compared to a larger space in which it takes place, a film in a diverse intra-scene space. In her work "The Promotion of Doula", female director Xu Jinglei embodies the in-scene space with the busyness of homes and offices in metropolitan Beijing and the hustle and bustle of bars in Beijing, and in addition, the camera is moved to Thailand to show us the leisure and relaxation of the region. In addition, in his work "Intimacy", the main locations for the in-scene shots are Hong Kong, China, Chengdu, China and London, England, showing us the different characteristics of different cities through the offices, rooms, and other public places in the camera. In her film "Beijing and New York", female director Li Xiaoyu, as the title of her film is, mainly uses Beijing and New York to show the in-scene space, because the theme of the film is a modern city love story, so there are many hotels, bars, rooms, streets and other full of life space. The film also spans two cities, Beijing and New York, and its main scenes include the following categories: rooms, buses, student campuses, markets, and the beach. The locations involved in the filming of *Pride and Prejudice* by director Haishu Li were mainly Beijing and Italy, while the presentation of the spaces within the scenes covered the shopping malls, rooms, elevators and spaces in the street scenes in Beijing, as well as some sites in Italy. In addition to the above, there are of course many other things that are worth exploring and presenting in the expanse of intra-scene space for women directors in the new century, so we will not go into them all here.

For women directors, the buildings introduced in the finished film from their perspective are not just a vehicle for what happens and an environment to set the scene. Their presence is not just a backdrop for a storyline, but they also embody a narrative. From these works, it can be seen that the interior spaces of the films of these women directors are open, and the camera switches between several interior spaces. At the same time, the presentation of various buildings in the film works of female directors expresses a certain tendency to borrow metaphors, making the social, cultural and political systems that constitute the focal point of identity (James Phelan & Peter J., 2007). Through the above, we can know that by locating the spatial narrative in such a vibrant modern city, for the presentation of the female director's work, not only can the three-dimensional sense of the film characters in the midst of life be more emphasized, but also bring a visual feast full of beauty to the audience.

## 2.2 Exploration of the hidden narrative of off-scene space

Off-scene space is defined as a set of elements related to a scene that are not included in the scene but may in some specific way allow the viewer to establish a connection with the film and thus make the coherence of the plot development smoother, with the main elements including characters and backgrounds. Off-screen spaces, in general, are expressed through external sound. Off-set space helps to create tension and suspense, stimulates the audience's imagination, and helps to highlight the character traits of the film's characters. The female director's work "One Night Surprise" by Yi-Meng Kim shows the initial scene of the heroine Michelle's birthday party, followed by the scene of the heroine being drunk and taken to the elevator by a man whose face cannot be seen, and then the scene of 40 days later. What happened in the middle of the skipped time period, as the audience, we do not know yet. However, when the information about the heroine's pregnancy is announced later, it is clear what happened in the space outside the scene, and the use of such space outside the scene has a great stimulating effect on the audience's imagination. In Xue Xiaolu's *Beijing Meets Seattle*, Wen Jiajia's lover Lao Zhong does not appear in the film, but is always in the off-screen space, and the audience can only portray Lao Zhong's character from Wen Jiajia's recollections and Lao Zhong's voice. "The in-picture space and the out-of-picture space are both interconnected and separated from each other in terms of narrative function and image portrayal, thus forming a special narrative tension (Li Xianjie. 2000)" To sum up, we can conclude that in the works of female directors, the film is able to present an extremely strong narrative effect, which is inseparable from the in-picture and out-of-picture space cooperation.

## 2.3 Harmonious echoing of real scenes and psychological space

In the works of female directors, the so-called heart space is the psychological and emotional activities of the charac-

ters in the film. Psychological space is not the same as the space inside and outside the scene described above. It lacks a certain objectivity and is the imagination of a person's heart, generally speaking, it is triggered by a specific event that draws one's attention and is closely related to human nature. In terms of the presentation of psychological space to empty shots, panoramic shots, such as memories of the plot, the imagination of the plot, as well as some subjective shots, flashback shots are psychological space form of presentation, their ultimate role is to show the characters and set the atmosphere. Space has a very strong expressive power, and its expressive power is not only in the space of the film plot, but also in the psychological space.

In the work of female director Jin Yimeng's "Very Perfect", the heroine Sophie, a cartoonist by profession, has a rich imagination and associative ability, and likes to build psychological activities before taking action, through which the director shows her psychological change process. As far as cinematography is concerned, the pre-narrative shots that show the future events in advance in the plot development can also be called a kind of psychological space (Pan Xiutong, 1988). For example, in her comic book "Love Manual", Sophie creates each drawing in advance to pre-describe the plot, although most of the time, everything does not develop in the direction she expects, but this kind of mental space in the film can better show the transformation of her character. In addition, in her work "Pride and Prejudice", Lee Haishu starts from the imaginary space of the hero Zhu Hou's mind, immersing himself in the heroic role of saving the princess valiantly. However, this mental space contrasts with the actual events, thus making the film present a humorous and not boring viewing effect. Immediately afterwards, we turn the camera to the heroine, Nanan Tang, whose psychological space emerges after she meets a girl wearing the same clothes as herself in the elevator, revealing her rich inner world, which makes the portrayal of this personality complete and real.

To a certain extent, the inclusion of imaginary space in female directors' films reflects the fact that in the current urban life context, men and women in real life can only vent their repressed emotions through imaginary space in order to show their real inner world. In the context of the new century, the use of diverse narrative space by female directors in turn raises the quality of the film to a higher level and brings the audience a visual experience from a different perspective.

### 3. Space and female space: growth, imagination, and healing

Admittedly, at the level of spatial gaze, women are not only the object of gaze, but also from women to women, to the human transition to establish self-image, mapping the subject and social relations mirror. Specifically, women to self, the cognition and experience of the society of life constitute women who discover themselves, identify with themselves and pursue themselves narrate. At the same time, in the space of self-formed femininity, women make public and wantonly highlight her as the master physical pleasure, though in the field of masculinity, can only be satisfied in the imagination. Women plan it in men Fence in the difficult struggle, also in the identification of self identity encountered heavy fog, eventually women because of their own perceptual sensitivity consciously chooses the area of identity to redeem themselves.

#### 3.1 Female growth space: the "rite of man" from women, women to people

Based on the current gender cultural dilemma, the growth of women not only refers to the birth of female individuals from young to adult Long process, at the same time, it also has the spiritual and psychological level of the deep meaning. According to Simone Dovova, a person is a woman, it is not so much "born" as "formed". The overlapping of culture makes women work Passive male-centered values as self-centered behavioral references. So, focus on the "growth" of women, the process contains deep meaning, that is, to find the subjectivity of women as themselves from the long historical situation. As the new Women in the writing of women directors often acquire new identity cognition and emotion along with the change of identity learn through practice. In this process, women's real pain, contradiction or liberation, pleasure, are unique to women Growth experience. And the new generation of female directors is exploring a story about female one through the circular change of their identity position a woman alone.

#### 3.2 Women: the gender enclosure of the "second sex"

There is no doubt that men become the absolute dominance of society, whether Eve acts in Western mythology Adam a fat bone created, or in the Chinese traditional culture, "not married from the father, both married from the husband, the husband died from the son". It can be seen in the discipline. Beauvoir believed that women were never the leader of society, she was the male attachment Kang, as the labeled eternal other of existence. In traditional patriarchal societies, women are defined as the "second sex", but women are not born, but gradually formed, which is closely related to the overall situation of women. Therefore, in the space presentation of the new generation of female directors, the status and edge of others can always see women everywhere.

## 4. Conclusion

To sum up, female directors in the new century have raised the development of Chinese cinema to a new level, and at the same time provided a path of reference for the development of China's film industry. Of course, we must also realize that there is no end to the road of progress, and we still need to promote the film industry to a better future with a modest and prudent attitude and a pace of innovative development.

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