

## Women's Social Issues Reflected in Chinese Women's Films

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**Abstract:** Film expresses and reproduces life, primarily expresses the ideology of the creator through the fusion of screen images and life-based narratives. In addition, the films act as the creator's reflective presentation of a certain social phenomenon or a certain theme. Recently, China's social concept has been influenced by diversified factors, such as the development of China's social ideological trend, the change of cultural concepts, and the improvement of women's economic status. On this background, women's social status has been significantly improved. Subsequently, changes in the status of women accelerated the exposure of social crises related to women.

**Keywords:** Female Film; Chinese Film; Women

Under the influence of China's Confucianism, men occupy an overwhelming right to speak in the traditional social division of labor, which is reflected in China's film industry, where the male perspective is consistently in the mainstream position, while women are typically constructed through male discourse. Nonetheless, with the continuous emergence of female directors, their profound understanding of the film industry has made them pay more attention to breaking the symbolic female dilemma in traditional films. Moreover, the change in women's social status, coupled with the return of women's consciousness, has prompted female directors to master more expression rights. Under this impetus, female directors focus on reflecting the awakening of women's consciousness in contemporary society as well as the social phenomenon characterized by the return of women's subjectivity by constructing diversified female roles. The female film creators, in other words, devote themselves to presenting women's living conditions, women's resistance, and the change of women's consciousness with the help of images, thereby telling women-related stories from the

perspective of women. Particularly, by reconstructing the discussion space of "sexuality and gender" within the films, they gradually revealed various female elements, such as female emotion, confusion, and absence, which were originally covered in the narrative of male films.

In China, female directors have long been in an unequal position compared with male directors. In particular, in the inter-generational history of directors, the "gender crisis" is an almost invisible problem in the inter-generational history of directors, which is also isolated by the professional barriers at the center of the male-dominated discourse. Moreover, female-related issues are typically isolated and alienated in a male-dominated environment influenced by Confucianism. To create an excellent development space in the professional environment, female filmmakers in China are raising and discussing numerous issues such as gender, gender diversity and ethnicity through creation. Nonetheless, they may face special pressure when expressing their views on gender issues. Therefore, they need to seek appropriate breakthrough methods and narrative methods to alleviate this pressure. In this regard, empowerment is the key to improving the status and expressiveness of female filmmakers, which can bring them significant visibility.

Released in mainland China in 2019, the movie *Send Me to the Green Cloud*, written and directed by Teng Congcong and produced by and starring Yao Chen, reveals the dilemmas and confusions of contemporary women by telling the story of Sheng Nan, a female reporter who accidentally discovers that she is suffering from ovarian cancer, and therefore embarks on a journey in search of her love and desire, as well as her own self. The movie is an exemplary example of contemporary feminist cinema. The themes of the movie are family, death, gender and idealism, and it shows the world from a woman's point of view, revealing the difficulties women face in today's society, and truly treating women as individual human beings, focusing on

women's inner world and values. What distinguishes this movie from traditional feminist movies is that it not only focuses on the plight of modern urban women, but also boldly and frankly expresses women's desires, "breaking through the male-female relationship under the male-dominated discourse, and showing the desires and ways out of the entanglement of different groups of people under the same hegemonic oppression." The significance of this type of movie is not only to reflect the current existential dilemma of women, but also to enlighten, with a view to arousing empathy and reflection among female viewers. The author of the article "Sending Me to the Green Cloud: Projecting Chinese Women's Consciousness on Screen in the New Era" mentions that "women's cinema, as a film with a distinctive affirmative stance for both men and women, is a kind of reflection, criticism, subversion and transcendence of the patriarchal culture. Therefore, in this context, women's cinema should first examine women's self-worth and have a clear awakening of self-consciousness."

Jean Baudrillard, in *The Consumer Society*, questioned whether the body is a female possession or a commodity and whether the female possession has indeed become an "object of the gaze", a "consumer product". Mass media content that "demonises" women and tends to be vulgar has cast a dark shadow over the minds of urban women, or they are unconsciously addicted to it. From the silent film era to the "Hepburn Fever" of the 1840s and 1850s, to the flamboyant and sexy "popcorn goddesses" of the mid-20th century, to the explosion of "feminist cinema" in the 1960s, and finally to the "feminist cinema" of today. The trend in women's cinema has been to "step down from the altar" and gradually become secularise. Under the pressure of "male-centrism" and the self-pity of "women bursting out of their cocoons into butterflies", where is feminist cinema heading?

European and American feminist film theory can be divided into three periods I. The period of methodological formation (1972-1975). This period reflects the difference between British and American feminist film studies, The American school is a sociological school, which is more subjective, while the British school draws on the influence of Freud, Lacan, and Roland Barthes, and pays more attention to methodology, hoping to explore the construction

of the female subject from an objective theoretical perspective. Second, the period of theoretical development (1975-1985). During this period, Laura Mulvey, a heavyweight British female film theorist, published a paper on *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, which used typical Hollywood narrative films to explain the audience's desire for voyeurism and narcissistic complex. Third, the period of reflection and transformation (1985-present). During this period feminist film scholars began to question the limits of psychoanalysis and the problems of gender theory of both sexes, from the social sciences (GENDER) words to replace the discussion of sex (SEX), began to radiate into the direction of race, skin colour, class, age, gender and other broader sociological theories.

In his dissertation "Invisible Women: Women in Contemporary Chinese Cinema and Women's Cinema", feminist scholar Dai Jinhua analyses the historical roots of the images of women from the social and cultural perspectives. In his paper "Invisible Women - Women in Contemporary Chinese Cinema and Women's Cinema", Jinhua analyses the historical roots of women's image from the social and cultural perspectives. He uses the term "women in cinema" to refer to women in cinema were highly politically symbolic after the liberation of New China, and analyses the background of the era in which the "Gaia-type" wife and mother, i.e., the mother of motherhood and the mother of the earth, were created. It also analyses the background of the "Gaia-style" wife and mother, that is, the mother-earth mother, and re-establishes the reset of the image of women through the "Reform and Rehabilitation" movement in the new era, and recalls the historical liquidation and cultural search for the roots of the "Fourth Generation", which has successfully become the guest of honour of world cinema through the historical and cultural tour. The "Fifth Generation" has succeeded in becoming a guest of honour in the world cinema by means of historical and cultural touring, while "Women's Cinema" analyses three types of typical female directors and points out the direction of their historical development.

In contemporary China, a group of new-generation directors have made films that reflect urban feminism, including Xu Jinglei, who has successfully transitioned herself from a literary director to a commercial film director. She has been evaluated by critics as "a woman of knowledge in her own films, and a symbol of

the truth, goodness, and beauty in other people's films. " In "Dulala's Promotion", released in 2010, director Xu Jinglei portrayed a new urban white-collar woman who strives for excellence in her career and independence in love. Because of the main fashion card, fashion and film industry is a twin brother and sister, restore to the female consciousness of the manifestation of the film Dulala Promotion in the majority of young people by the popularity at the same time achieved remarkable box office results. Experts point out that the psychology of consumption comes from the constant desire in any situation, and a set of figures pointed out that: with the intensification of social stratification, white-collar workers, the consumption of luxury goods, real estate, automobiles and so on to support their lifestyles has shown a trend of climbing higher and higher. Women, the practitioners of the "longest revolution", are bound to reach a new level of happiness as reform and opening up continue to progress and deepen.

The emergence of female coming-of-age stories has established the female figure as the absolute subject of feminist film narratives. The film writes a "chronicle" of women through the depiction of women's growth stories: on the one hand, it records women's struggles for their independence and moral justice at every stage of their lives; on the other hand, it records the process of women's self-identification during their growth stages. These processes are full of pain and difficulty, not only because of external obstacles, but also because of women's internal struggles. Thus, the narration of women's coming-of-age stories contradicts the purpose of traditional cinema, which is to provide visual pleasure, and thus achieves the purpose of deconstructing visual pleasure and liberating women from the male gaze. Second, the relationship between female figures is also a detail that feminist cinema focuses on depicting, which can be mainly classified into two categories: sisterhood and mother-daughter

relationship, either of which is a great challenge to male privilege. The female figure and the feminist film complement each other. As a result of the emergence and development of feminist cinema, the image of women has shifted from a subordinate position to a dominant one; at the same time, the image of women has also opened up a new path for the narrative of feminist cinema.

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