

# A Brief Analysis of the Characteristics of Modern Urban Love Subject TV Series

Taking "Daughter-in-Law's Good Times", "Let's Get Married", "Let's Fall in Love" as Examples

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**Abstract**—The modern urban love subject TV series that are represented by Liu Jiang's "Daughter-in-Law's Good Times", "Let's Get Married" and "Let's Fall In Love", all revolve around the modern urban career, love, marriage and gender relations. The complex character relationships, ups and downs of the story and vivid character images attract audiences' attention, not only won a lot of awards, but also lead to a discussion frenzy with full topic degree. All these undoubtedly reflect the director Liu Jiang emphasizes the real world in story selection, keen on the dissemination of positive energy; emphasizes on complexity and changeability, ups and downs in the plot setting and has its very distinctive feminist perspective. These time meanings hidden behind the story are worthy of our exploration.

**Keywords**—modern urban love subject TV series; characteristic; "Daughter-in-Law's Good Times"; "Let's Get Married"; "Let's Fall in Love"

## I. INTRODUCTION

Recently, the modern urban love subject TV series that are represented by Liu Jiang's "Daughter-in-Law's Good Times", "Let's get married" and "Let's Fall in Love", all revolve around the modern urban career, love, marriage and gender relations. The complex character relationships, ups and downs of the story and vivid character images attract audiences' attention, not only won a lot of awards, such as "Daughter-in-Law's Good Times" won 2009 Shanghai Ratings Award, 2009 Best Harmony Life TV series award, 2010 Shanghai Magnolia Award Best TV Series Silver Award, 2010 Sohu Internet The Best TV Series of first quarter Award, 2010 The 25th Golden Eagle Award for outstanding TV Series, 2010 Tokyo International TV Festival The best overseas TV series Award, 2010 "National TV Series Festival" "Top Ten TV series" and many other awards, later it also has been translated into Swahili language and showed in Tanzania then caused a strong reaction. It has been one of the representative works for Chinese TV Series to the world. "Let's Get Married" Unprecedentedly broadcast simultaneously in the "Peaking Viewing Time" both on CCTV and Hunan TV, and achieved high ratings, it was quite well received because of the positive emotional energy it transmitted; and "Let's Fall in Love" which recently broadcast in Hunan TV occupied the peak

ratings once start, and also lead to discussion frenzy with full topic degree. All these undoubtedly reflects the director Liu Jiang emphasis the real world in story selection, keen on the dissemination of positive energy; emphasis on complex and volatile ups and downs and its very distinctive feminist perspective in plot setting. This article is to explore the common characteristics of the three TV Series based on the general view of these three Series, summarize its advantages, success reasons and problems and hope to help with the TV series creation in new era.

## II. MODERN CONCEPTION, CONTENT AND SUBJECT TRANSMIT POSITIVE ENERGY

"Television is one of the most voyeuristic of all media, not only because it provides more material in the most common accepted way in the constantly picture flow, but also because it is the drama media which has the most intimate relationship with us...Television is viewed in close distance and more private spaces. The close-up of television performers is proportionately close to direct human contact." [1] It can be said that television has long been the mass media which has the closest relationship between the reality and the audience, and TV series through television to spread its influence into the ordinary life of thousands of households. Liu Jiang's modern urban love subject TV series is drawn from the realistic situation in the modern society happened around the masses in the city, showing the living conditions and emotion confusions of the young generation, thus easily lead to the audiences' resonance. At the same time, the director uses the love drama to correct the current the wrong tendencies in current love, marriage and family view, delivered positive energy to the audiences.

The TV Series "Daughter-in-Law's Good Times" which is produced by Beijing Hualu Baina Film Co., Ltd. and co-stared by Haiqing, Huang Haibo, Bai Han and Lin Shen tells the whole process of beautiful nurse Mao Doudou and steady pragmatic photographer Yu Wei from their blind date, overcoming the difficulties until their happy marriage. It praised the "national good wife" Mao Doudou's optimistic wit and filial virtues. At the same time, the story is also intertwined with the conflicts between Mao Doudou and two

families, two mother-in-laws, eccentric sister-in-law and others, finally depict a harmonious reunion beautiful situation.

"Let's Get Married" which is co-filmed by CCTV and Hunan Broadcasting System, co-starred by Huang Haibo and Gao Yuanyuan, selected the "old leftover woman" Yang Tao and the "man fear to marriage" Guo Ran as its two typical social images, to describe the love story that they met and love each other, and get a marriage tangle, and finally break through the obstacles from families and others and happily married. It explores the conflicts and differences between love and marriage, ideal and family, and the marriage concept of parents and that of children, revealing when the marriage has problem, divorce is not the best solution, understanding and tolerance may be able to save a happy family, and also criticizes the reality strange elephant of constantly rising material requirements in current marriage view, it advocates the pure and equal view of love.

"Let's Fall in Love" as the sequel of "Let's Get Married" (Co-starred by Zhang Jingchu, Zhang Xinyi, Qin Lan, Yuan Hong, Ming Dao, Zhang Xi Lin and other stars) shaped three female sisters with the closest relationships, talked about their emotional entanglements and life experience. Although the process is full of hardships and frustrations, "impregnable" friendship is also been tested when face the reality, but through their efforts, persistence and tolerance eventually they have got their desired happiness.

Liu Jiang once said: "In addition to entertainment, film and television works also should have their own Jing, Qi, Shen. Whether in any age or any country, popular film and television works must spread the correct and mainstream values, in the artistic expression it should reflect the different aesthetic standards, this is by no means an empty slogan, but a responsibility that each television staff should bear. "[2] Throughout the above three, they all convey the point of view that harmonious, ordinary and thanksgiving is the happiness, which makes people deeply understand the importance of goodness, understanding, forgiveness, optimism, trust and tolerance for the family and social harmony, it promotes the love between husband and wife, between parents and children, between friends, virtually convey the true meaning of life and full of positive energy, so that the audiences are inspired deeply.

### III. PLOT IS DIVERSE, TO MEET FAMILY ETHICS AND CULTURE DEMANDS

John Fisk once said in "Television Culture" addressed realism: "The reality recreated has a form that makes it easy to understand. Its main approach is: to ensure that the contact between the constituent elements and their relationship are not only clear but is logical; to ensure that the narrative follow the basic principles of causation; to ensure that each component will help make it meaningful; anything is not a minor or accidental. "[3] And TV series as a "window" for audience to watch the real world, it often highly enriched the social attitudes, of which the conflict is the power factor to promote the development of the plot, and director Liu Jiang is very good at creating a wide range of distinctive characters, and display the conflicts and problems multi-line coexistence and

layer by layer in his work, making the story ups and downs, and the reflected value content attract further thinking.

"Daughter-in-Law's Good Times" based on reality, related to the purchase difficulties, wedding mode, employment rate, divorce rate, flash marriage, mistress and other social hot topics which make the audience easily resonate, the homely language humor and vivid, and broke the old daughter-in-law fighting with mother-in-law "Daughter-in-law drama", cleverly conceived, reflect the family and love force during the love and hate entanglement among the families. "Leftover woman" Mao Doudou had a sense of hopelessness for marriage because her ex-boyfriend Li Ruoxuu abandoned her, until met a stable and reliable but was "left" photographer Yu Wei, the two from out of blows friendship to later lean close to and depend on each other, and get married happily, it is not easy. However, Mao Doudou is facing two incompatible mother-in-laws: Cao Xinmei who was betrayed by her ex-husband and feel envy and hate, and Yao Jing who became wife from mistress and refuse to admit being inferior, so this new daughter-in-law was confused and out of place to deal with two mother-in-laws' daily fighting, after suffering the persecution she still need to use all her skills to fight a battle with wits and courage to her mother-in-law; and her younger brother Mao Feng is a playboy and he is arrogant and willful, abandon the old for the new; Yu Wei's little sister Yu Hao against her sister-in-law everywhere because of psychological deviation ... A lot of contradictions all focus on Mao Doudou and Yu Wei, the plot also ups and downs because of that, rhythm is tension but humor. Therefore, the director Liu Jiang had this evaluation of the drama: "So there is sadness, because there are life and death parting pain, there is fate to get people's helplessness; so there is joy, because laughing materials are hiding in the laugh and rage. So, this is a drama which laughs in the tears, crying and laughing together." [4]

"Let's Get Married" developed from the topic of blind date for leftover men and women, Yang Tao and Guo Ran became the object of forced marriage of their parents because they are old and unmarried, after these two fell in love because of Guo Ran's fear of marriage they almost separated. Yang Tao and Wei Wei's mother help her for blind date but her level of material requirements is extremely high, Wei Wei as Yang Tao's best friend got into the emotional entanglements with Li Wei at the same time, Yang Tao's cousin Su Qing is also facing the crisis of her husband's betrayal and marital breakdown, Yang's mother and Lao Li's "Twilight Love" is naturally laughed and mocked by people.... "TV series narrative is often based on the daily experience as the main content, use the family story as main subject and life drama as the narrative feature, in a way that can be said, daily 'life flow' constitute the 'narrative flow' on screen which constitutes a support for narrative noumenon of TV series." [5] It can be said, "Let's Get Married" expressed the conflicts of people's youth confusion, mid-aged crisis, old-aged loneliness for marriage and the conflicts about family and friendship in real life, it also reflected in multi-valued today, mass people's confusion and thinking about life positioning choice, occupational stress, love faith, marriage Life and material basis, the content is very tension.

And if the above two series are all contradictions and disputes occurred in their loved ones and family, all are the real manifestation of affection and love, then "Let's fall in love" reveal the contradictions between best girl friends, couples, husband and wife from the beginning: Lin Xiaoxiao has talent but not being used, her creation work was copied and also she got fired by her boss; Pan Zhizhi and Kang Qiao because of love affairs led to Kang Qiao wife's suicide; and Kang married Zhizhi's girlfriend Cai Chunni; Kang's mother made all kinds of difficulties to Chuni, Kang's daughter Sichun hate her "vixen" stepmother Chuni, and this time Chuni's first love boyfriend Huang Shaogu returned home, and brought up the secret that Chunni already has a daughter for him; and Lin Xiaoxiao also faced the predicament of the her husband having affairs with a girl student (Kang Qiao's sister), marriage breakdown and she has to take care of her son with congenital diseases, until the emergence of Shi Guang who changed Xiaoxiao's career and life, they had conflict with Kang Qiao and Chunni in business, at the same time Zhizhi crazy pursuit Shi Guang... it can be said until here the audience have already shouted "destroy their views", "too dramatic", but the director Liu Jiang believe life is far more dramatic than the story, and TV series just provide the chance for the audience to re-examine their lives. The complex and contradictory of character relationship in the series can be described as an unprecedented, very short story revealed the heroes' career, friendship and love are seriously challenged, although the characters bury the hatchet at last, and they all get the dignity of life as they wanted, but TV series with such "wonderful" plot really make the audience "burning brain". But it is the sisters and girlfriends twists and turns love and kill, that make this drama attract the audience's eyes, full of topic degree.

It can be said that the above three TV series are all with multiple clues and very logical, contradictory settings not only made the audience clapped but also promoted the development of the plot, and the characteristics of the characters also exacerbated the contradictions and conflicts, such as unreasonable Cao Xinmei, stubborn Yao Jing from "Daughter-in-Law's Good Times", vanity comparison Xue Sumei and Lan Pingping, traditional and conservative of Guo Ran's mother from "Let's get married", and in "Let's Fall in Love" Lin Xiaoxiao insisted on the principles, Cai Chunni's conceited goodness, Yang Guang's publicity and domineering, Kang Qiao's smart calculations, etc., all made the story forward step by step, layer by layer. They reflected the social reality, logical and complex, full of ups and downs.

#### IV. FEMALE PERSPECTIVE, REPEAT LOVE AND MARRIAGE DIALOGUE

It is worth mentioning that "Daughter-in-Law's Good Times", "Let's Get Married", "Let's Fall in Love" these three TV series are all start with the modern urban men and women love, marriage, gender relations, they have clear feminist perspective. First of all, the three series revealed all kinds of discrimination and prejudice of today's society for women especially older unmarried women. Mao Doudou is old unmarried woman so she was failed in many of her blind dates; Yang Tao as the "Representative of leftover women" actually become the first choice for the boss to fire; Pan Zhizhi did not

get married when she was 30 years old, she was so anxious to get married and suffered bad man...The characters' language also virtually reveal the consciousness, such as Yang Tao's mother often say "Leftover food can heat, leftover women is over, how old are you?" "Women's golden period only this few years, the rest is over. If you did not take the chance, then you will never have the chance again!" This kind discourse, we can see the director use characters' language to reflect the embarrassing situation of today's "leftover women".

But at the same time, the three series also show that today's women are no longer simply filial piety in-laws, take care of her husband, raising their children, they have independent thinking, work and life. Mao Doudou as a nurse she is conscientious and do her best, as a wife she is honest, intelligent harmony, optimistic, handle all the complex relationships with love; Yang Tao pull her forces together and start afresh after she got fired, and ultimately achieve the desire to open bridal salon; Lin Xiaoxiao eventually get successful in architecture industrial with her own talent, Pan Zhizhi is a career woman herself, even the gentle and virtuous Cai Chunni also use of words to record her own stories under the encouragement of Huang Shaogu...They totally broke the noisy of "Family ethics drama" in the past, suffer bitterly and nurse a deep hatred situation, also changed the image of female characters, enriched their spiritual world.

Secondly, in the "Filial piety is the most important of all virtues" China, daughter-in-law has been the one who should follow the "Wen Liang Gong Jian Rang", and in the process, her mother-in-law will act as a teaching or even malicious role. In the previous film and television works, mother-in-law has absolute supremacy, due to different concepts, different positions and other reasons often appear the phenomenon of displeased mother-in-law suppressing daughter-in-law. The relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in the new era has been greatly improved. Nowadays, there is not only conflict and contradiction between the two, but also mutual understanding and tolerance. "Daughter-in-Law's Good Time" both have gentle Pan Meili's harmonious relationship with mother-in-law and Mao Doudou and Cao Xinmei eventually became mother and daughter because of love; In "Let's get married", Guo Ran's mother in order to achieve children's dreams and agreed Yang Tao continue to learn; In "Let's fall in love", Kang Qiao's mother finally touched by Chuni's humility and never leave; this makes a more harmonious, more intelligent relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law to be presented to meet the audience's moral values and emotional needs.

Thirdly, the relationship between men and women in these three series are more equal, and with the transformation of society, the marriage situation of both sexes is also more complex than in the past. For example, more and more family ethics series appeared "Mistress", so Liu Jiang explored "extramarital affairs" in these three series as well, and strive to the importance of loyalty, trust and tolerance, thus established a correct value. It is worth mentioning that, Liu Jiang directed "Daughter-in-Law's Good Times", "Let's Get Married", "Let's Fall in Love" as the representative of modern urban love subject TV series broke the male dominated big perspective of film and television works in the past, the main body is

gradually converted to real life women and their love story, the "Bromeo", "Sunshine boy", "Male intimate" images are also more and more common, they have been active in a variety of successful women's side to be their shelter and solve their problems, which also reflects from the side while progress of society women's social status are increasingly high. At the same time, this positioning has also successfully attracted female who as the main audience groups for TV series, thus ensure the good effect of the TV series.

## V. CONCLUSION

Tonlinson once said: "In post-modern culture, television is not a reflection of society, on the contrary, society is a reflection of television" [6], director Liu Jiang is very good at selecting social "civilians" ordinary, trivial small household affairs to express social reality, so that the audience could have total view of society and reflect on their own during the laughing and crying, and to feel the truth, kindness and beauty. Although the modern urban love subject TV series which represented by the above three also has some shortcomings and got questioned, such as follow the creation, plot and conflict are exactly the same, "philistine mother-in-law" image appears repeatedly and so on, but as the writer Wang Liping said: Which kind of TV series get popular in which period is not depended on some people's thinking and shouting, but depend on emergence of one or some TV series which can stand tests. Liu Jiang, director of "Daughter-in-Law's Good Times", "Let's Get Married", "Let's Fall in Love" focuses on reality based on society for story selection, keen to spread positive energy; emphasizes the complex and volatile, ups and downs for plot setting, and has a very distinctive feminist perspective, which all make these three TV series profoundly highlighted many problems and conflicts in life, reflect the new era women's intelligent and harmonious state, promote the small love between family and friends and the big love with strangers. Among many film and television works which foothold "big man" and "big event", it was like a clear spring which brought a warm and beautiful good feeling for the audience, its positive significance is beyond doubt. This article is to explore the common characteristics of the three TV Series based on the general view of these three Series, summarize its advantages, success reasons and problems and hope to help with the TV series creation in new era.

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