

# A Study on the Embodiment of New Sensation Literature in Film Art

-- Taking Lou Ye's Suzhou Creek as an Example

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**Abstract:** The novels of the New Sensation, which rose in the late 1920s and early 1930s, have brought fresh feelings to the new literature with their new, strange and strange characteristics. The discussion of the narrative art of the New Sensation plays a great role in correctly understanding the artistic value, style and characteristics of the New Sensation novels. The narrative development of the Suzhou Creek by Lou Ye is not only a structural reference and innovation, but also a practical behavior of the change of creative ideas. The new feeling of Suzhou Creek is characterized by the equal transformation of narrative perspective, the control of emotional rhythm and synchronic time and space. This paper starts with narration, and enters into the reading space of the novel from three aspects: narrative angle, narrative time and space, and narrative structure to capture and appreciate this "new feeling", so as to grasp the main artistic features of this novel genre.

**Keywords:** New Sensation, Suzhou Creek, Film art.

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## 1. Introduction

In the history of modern Chinese literature, a new force in the "modernism" literary schools is the novel creation of the "new feeling" school that rose from the late 1920s to the early 1930s. It was born in Shanghai, which is known as the "Oriental Paris"[1]. The grotesque urban life is the cradle of the new sense school. The main representatives are Liu Naou, Mu Shiyong, Shi Zhecun and Ye Lingfeng. Their novels, from the literary tendency to artistic expression, all show a totally different artistic personality from the "May 4th" novels and contemporaneous novels. The novelty, strangeness and strangeness in the artistic form of the novel of the New Sensation really bring new feelings to the new literature[2]. Their works have a strong modern color, and have been greatly concerned by the consistently conservative Chinese readers. With new senses and new terms, they have become popular with "psychological novels" and "stream of consciousness novels". At that time, China's film industry was actually just maturing[3]. There were few studies on technical factors such as montage, music and lighting. The shooting time of sound films was not long. The awareness of the expressiveness of music had just emerged. The shooting method was mainly realism[4]. The lens was objective. The magic features and strong psychological impact that can be created by pictures, music and lighting were not explored. Under such a premise, the new feeling novel has a more prominent significance in exploring the unique way of expressing the characters' hearts. It is not only affected by the sound, light and color of the film, but also has a refreshing effect on the film technology and performance concept.

Suzhou Creek, a work released by Lou Ye, the sixth generation director of China, in 2000, won many international awards, such as the best film in the 29th Rotterdam International Film Festival in the Netherlands and the best film in the 25th Paris International Film Festival. However, there are not many people who have actually seen it in China. The sixth generation directors have a common feature, that is, they are good at expressing the life of "marginal people"[5].

They are people who are at the bottom of the society, have no jobs or are engaged in very unstable jobs, are not affiliated with any organization, and bear all kinds of hardships of life alone, which not only reflects the sense of drift but also shows that they are ordinary people. Suzhou Creek tells the love story of marginalized people[6]. Movies like Suzhou Creek and filmmakers like Lou Ye are the beneficiaries of the established film education, production, academic appraisal system and fashion culture dissemination[7]. Today, it is possible that they have been improperly placed high hopes. To what extent can they expand and enhance the expressive force of Chinese image narration, and to what extent can they enrich and deepen their cognition and thinking about contemporary Chinese humanity? In the final analysis, what kind of image space and spiritual space have they participated in building? In Lou Ye's Suzhou Creek, the New Sensation School is well represented. Based on Lou Ye's Suzhou Creek, this paper makes an in-depth study of the embodiment of New Sensation Literature in film art[8].

## 2. The Relationship between New Sensational Novels and Movies

The existence way of New Sensation novels and movies is completely different, and the connection between them depends on the connection way between movies and words: screenplay. Actually, the movie script came into being a long time later than the movie itself. At first, the movie was just the simplest imitation of life: the life scenes of labor and work, the records of family life interests, the political, cultural and news records, the shooting of natural scenery and street scenes, etc., so there was no need for a movie script[9]. With the advent of sound film, film has gradually developed into an independent art. At the same time, with the expansion of the film performance field and the deepening of its content and meaning, it is necessary for someone to use the image thinking of the film to make a careful plan before shooting the content with complex structure, clear context and nuance. Under such circumstances, movie scripts came into being.

Today's movie scripts can not only reflect the reality, but also depict vivid pictures of life. Moreover, they also have unique and effective ways to express their materials. If we connect movies with new sensation novels and interpret the new sensation novels as screenplays, we can understand what unique and effective expressions were at that time[10]. The new sensationalism novels have the characteristics of film in form, including external and internal, as shown in Figure 1.

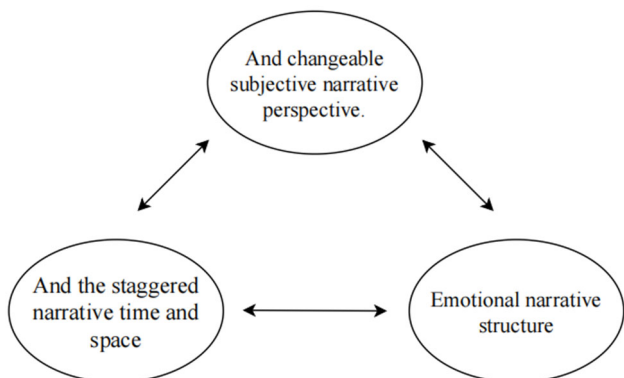


Figure 1. Film Features of the New Sensibility Novels in Form

### 3. The Narrative Art of New Sensation Novels Reflected in Movies

This is the first work of the Chinese New Sensation School. Later novelists made beneficial attempts in this respect, innovated boldly in narrative angle, narrative time and space, and narrative structure, and became the most modernist literary school in the history of modern literature in China. The structure is shown in Figure 2.

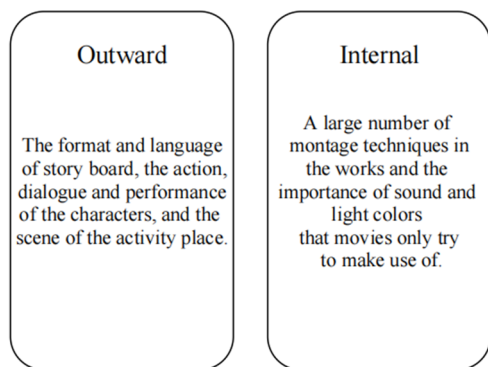


Figure 2. Narrative Structure of New Sensibility Novels

#### 3.1. Variable and subjective narrative perspective

Narrative perspective is also called viewpoint. Point of view comes from perspective terms in western paintings, and borrowed from novel narrative criticism refers to the relationship between the narrator and the story he tells. Chinese traditional novel narrative techniques are good at telling stories in an all-knowing and all-powerful way. However, with the emergence of modern western philosophical thoughts, even the omniscient and omnipotent God in people's minds has been declared dead by Nietzsche. Therefore, the omniscient narrative of the author in the novel has been greatly doubted and challenged. Thus, the restrictive narrative came into being. During the May 4th Movement, some writers began to consciously break the shackles of omniscient perspective and use character perspective and

pure objective perspective to narrate. In the novel creation of the New Sensation School, it is a large number of people's perspectives to narrate. The so-called character perspective means that a certain character in the novel acts as the narrator, and the narration is limited to what this character sees and feels. Perspectives can be either in the first person form or in the third person form; Narration from the perspective of characters has obvious subjective color, so that the hidden inner world of characters can be directly presented to readers. It is through the subjective feelings of the characters that the novel of the New Sensation School recreates an upside-down and disordered video world with strong subjective colors, giving people a novel and real feeling. Suzhou Creek is a good example of the change and control of perspective.

In the middle of the film's length, the change of narrative perspective divides the whole film into two parts, which becomes the critical point for me to construct the love story of the motor and the motor to complete its own story. In the first half, "I" shaped the love story between Motor and Peony. "I" pulled the motor and peony into the lens with fabricated and uncertain language such as "should be" and became the center of the story. After Peony jumped off the Suzhou River, "I", as the narrator, couldn't go on with this story, but Motor finished his own story. Here, the motor, as the object being told, jumped out of the control of "I" and became another person living around Suzhou Creek with "I". Although "I" has handed over the power of story development to Motor, Motor has not become another "I"-the person who controls the story, but the person who happens the story. From this moment on, he had an equal say with Meimei, and became a person who lived freely but was still narrated by "I" or the camera. It can be seen from this that the director's changing perspective in the film not only successfully meets the special needs of the narrative structure, but also completes the theme construction from different angles, and presents the fictional essence to the narrative structure formed by different perspectives. In the whole process, the appearance of different perspectives and different narrators ultimately depends on the director himself.

#### 3.2. Interlaced narrative time and space

Traditional novel is a linear narrative that reflects the one-dimensional time, and readers' reading expectation is also firmly tied to a series of suspense "If you want to know what will happen, listen to the next episode". This kind of linear narrative, which obeys nature and walks clockwise, will inevitably bring its own shortcomings and shortcomings once it becomes a pattern and continues. "In a sense, the time of narration is a linear time, while the time of story occurrence is three-dimensional. In a story, several events can happen at the same time, but the discourse must narrate them one by one, and a complex image is projected onto a straight line." This is the difficult problem faced by narrative works: there is obviously a mismatch between the time of description and the time of events.

In the narrative structure of Suzhou Creek, the setting of time and space presents a staggered state. The staggered nodes appeared after the peony jumped into the river, and "I" couldn't continue the story of Motor and let Motor finish his own story. Before the node, the story between the fictional motor and peony of "I" began with the narration of "I", which was later in time than the love between "I" and Meimei. After that, Motor jumped out of the fictional narrative of "I" and became a person who existed in the same time and space with "I". That is to say, the time that the motor exists coincides

with the time that I exist in the same space. The beginning time is different, but they meet each other, which makes the space-time structure of the film cross. On the premise that the director intentionally confuses truth with fiction, the only thing that can be confirmed is fiction itself. Under the fiction, the effect of time dislocation and crossing is to make the viewers look at it with equal eyes when they have to eliminate the chronological order. As a result, the narrative of the film broke through diachronic, completed the construction of synchronic space, and got a chance to juxtapose characters, ideas and events on the same level.

### 3.3. Narrative structure of psychological emotion

After a rough inspection of the New Sensation School novels from the narrative perspective and narrative time and space, we found that the traditional story centered plot model and the character and character centered modality model of novels were ignored, and the psychological emotional model that conveys a certain life experience took its place. In the novels of the New Sensation School, although the story exists, it is not intended to constitute the plot; There are some characters in the novel, but they have retreated to the second line. Although the plot mode seems to cast a faint shadow in the novel, the purpose of the novel to tell some events and introduce several characters is to create pictures and scenes, render a certain atmosphere, and finally capture the writer's unique feeling of urban life. Therefore, in order to convey their sense of the city, the New Sensation School novelists deliberately pursued the deep psychological reality of the characters. Through the perspective of the characters' mentality and the description of their feelings, it represents an emotional experience of modern urban life and reflects the urban life and the world. In the new sense school writers, psychological presentation is the axis of the novel to reflect the world and the basic framework for constructing the psychological emotional structure of the novel.

The director's special arrangement of the plot makes the film full of emotional rhythm. There are two emotional peaks in the whole film: one is that Peony jumped down the Suzhou Creek after being kidnapped, and the appearance time is half the length of the film; One is that "I" broke up with Meimei, and Ma Ma found the peony. The time of appearance is three quarters of the length of the film. When the first emotional peak appeared, from the perspective of "I", Ma Ma betrayed his love and took part in the kidnapping of peonies for money. Peony, on the other hand, jumped down the Suzhou Creek when she found herself betrayed by her lover. Before the kidnapping, the emotional communication between Ma Ma and Peony was very little. In my words, "a man and a woman are together, and then? Naturally, love." Under this emotional wave, they had the first and only conversation, even though they stood on both sides of the guardrail on the Suzhou River Bridge and played the role of threat and being threatened. When the second emotional peak came, the number of people with mixed emotions expanded to four, adding "I" and Meimei. Because of the appearance of the motor, "I" and Meimei finally stood on the same platform to exchange views on love. Then, like freehand brushwork, the "episodic paragraphs" that have nothing to do with the story clues temporarily put the film in a soothing mood.

## 4. Conclusions

From the above three aspects, we roughly discuss the narrative art of New Sensation novels. As the first literary school with modernism in China, from the literary pattern, at that time, their pioneering attempt of modernism was not universally accepted, even in the literary circle, which was of course related to the artistic interest determined by the times, national cultural traditions and thinking habits. In fact, in a broader sense, the artistic exploration of the novelists of the New Sensation School, as an experiment of modernism, has inestimable value for the establishment of Chinese modernism and the development of narrative art of Chinese novels. With a complicated narrative structure, the birth of Suzhou Creek seems to be a comprehensive sample of text experiments around the 20th century. Some of the narrative experiments in Suzhou Creek were intentional by the director, while others were invisible creations that the director didn't notice. It is the change of cultural context at the end of the century that provides the background for the growth of Suzhou Creek as well as explanatory footnotes. The narrative structure of its "overall polyphony" is not simply a narrative structure experiment, but the change of values feeds back the changes in content and structure. On the basis of fiction, the previous value judgment in Suzhou Creek becomes pale and weak, and the author and the characters have the same confusion. However, this confusion prompted the audience to reflect in the process of watching the movie. The appearance of Suzhou Creek provides us with a narrative model to dissect, and at the same time, it reveals the different creative consciousness and opinions of the sixth generation directors and the past directors from the side.

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