

The Translation and Suspension of Urban Women's Plight in Chinese Cinema: A Comparative Study of *Her Story* and *Fish Flew Away* from a Popular Feminist Perspective

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Abstract

In recent years, 'she-themed' films centred on women's experiences have gradually become a significant part of the Chinese film market. However, films about women in the past have tended to focus on romantic narratives and family conflicts, while rarely depicting the social challenges faced by women. This article takes *Her Story* and *Fish Flew Away* as its subjects and, drawing on the dual dimensions of sisterhood and motherhood, explores, from the perspective of popular feminism, the different narrative approaches adopted by these two films in depicting the predicaments of urban women. The comparison focuses on recurrent scenes of care, conflict and emotional support, tracing how each film positions its female characters in relation to institutional absence and patriarchal expectation. Theoretical research and textual analysis reveal that *Her Story* translates structural predicaments into emotional experiences with which the audience can empathize, offering emotional solace through sisterly mutual support and collective mothering; *Fish Flew Away*, on the other hand, suspends the structural roots of these predicaments, embedding women's issues within a patriarchal framework and reinforcing traditional norms of intensive motherhood. On this basis, this paper proposes an analytical framework of 'translation' and 'suspension' to understand the varying applications of popular feminism in contemporary Chinese films about women.

Keywords: Collective Mothering; Intensive Motherhood; Narrative Strategy; Sisterhood; Structural Inequality