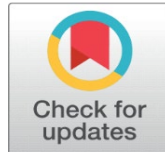


EXPLORE AND ANALYSE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF DIFFERENT TYPES AND FUNCTIONAL EXPRESSION OF A FULL-LENGTH SHOT IN TSAI MING-LIANG'S FILM WORK

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Received 12 December 2022

Accepted 13 January 2023

Published 31 January 2023

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DOI

[10.29121/granthaalayah.v11.i1.2023.4979](https://doi.org/10.29121/granthaalayah.v11.i1.2023.4979)

Funding: Zhejiang Province digital cultural and creative Industry Production and education integration engineering base project (Zhejiang development reform society [2020] No.319).

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ABSTRACT

Among the directors of the rise of movies in Taiwan in the 1990s, undoubtedly, Tsai Ming-liang is one of the most artistic and personalized directors. Tsai focuses on the present and shows an indifferent attitude towards the future. This kind of indifferent attitude, which has been continued in the lens language, makes the full-length shots have an indifferent spectator perspective, depicting a post-modern industrial society which have a defamiliarization effect and full of dreamlike color, and setting off people's marginality and sense of unbelonging. The figure has no goals and ideals in the shot. Tsai focuses on young people in modern society, describing the muddleheaded state of life to the full, conveying the disillusionment spirit of ideal home.

Keywords: Ming-Liang Tsai, A Full-Length Shot, Characteristics of Different Types, Functional Expression

1. AN OVERVIEW OF THE FULL-LENGTH SHOTS IN TSAI MING-LIANG'S FILMS

As an important way of expression in films and television language system, a full-length shot is favored by many directors at home and abroad. Tsai Ming-liang is very fond of using a full-length shot which became one of the most prominent features of his films in his film creation. The most intuitive feeling conveyed to the

audience by his films is that there are few lines, and a single shot lasts a long time. Since Tsai directed the "Water Trilogy", his film style is gradually stable, a full-length shot gradually become one of the labels of Tsai's films, also become an indispensable way of Tsai's film creation process. The full-length shots in Tsai's films very a lot, which can be simply summarized into three types: static fixed long shot, the long shots of depth of field with richness, long shot in motion with naturalness.

Table 1

Table 1 Long Shots Statistics Sheet			
Film title	Number of shots	Number of long shots	Long shot ratio
<i>Rebels of the Neon God</i>	85	54	63%
<i>Vive L'Amour</i>	70	63	90%
<i>The river</i>	72	69	95%
<i>The Hole</i>	59	56	93%
<i>7 to 400 Blows</i>	67	58	86%
<i>Good Bye,Dragon Lnn</i>	54	47	87%
<i>The Wayward Cloud</i>	60	50	83%
<i>I Don't Want to Sleep Alone</i>	63	59	93%
<i>Stray Dogs</i>	77	75	97%

In short, any single shot longer than 10 seconds can be called a long shot. According to Table 1, most of the shots used in Tsai Ming-liang's films tend to be long shots. Since his first work, *Rebels of the Neon God*, long shots have been used 63 percent of the time. After the "Water Trilogy", his video style tends to be stable, using long shots for large fragments. In his later creation, the number of shots in his film is less than 100, while the number of long shots accounts for more than 90%.

Like a monitor, the camera in Tsai Ming-liang's film pays attention to the real and complete playback function of the long shots to the reality, and records people and objects without any choice, which includes indifferent material world and indifferent independent individuals. The relationship between the lens and the picture implies the relationship between the film and the audience's eyes [Chunjun \(2006\)](#). Through the long shots, the audience can see the scene of the characters and the external expression of the inner world.

From the perspective of technological means, the shooting method of long shots expands the visibility of the picture. Therefore, the information of the picture is more abundant, and the living environment created is more realistic. The long shot shows the continuous time and space, and the expression of emotion is more like the real-life situation, and the emotional expression of the protagonist is fuller and more infectious. The shooting time of a full-length shot is continuous, thus creating a more complete film space and conveying a richer amount of information. Such shots weaken the narrative and lyrical functions in the text and strengthen the narrative and lyrical functions of the shot itself. Tsai Ming-liang takes a longer time to focus on the inner world of the characters, reflecting the reality that is the inner desolation of modern people.

2. THE TYPE OF LONG SHOTS IN TSAI MING-LIANG'S FILMS

2.1. FIXED LONG SHOTS:STATIC PROPERTY

Fixed long shot refers to a shooting technique, which is to fix the camera position and shoot a scene for a long time. Fixed long shots have the characteristics of static because the camera position stays still for a long time and the shooting frame stays still. In this stubborn long time fixed shot, the characters stay quietly, in such a static foreground and character space, the stagnant frames brought a strong sense of pressure [Tao \(2002\)](#). Fixed long shots are frequently used in Tsai's films. For example, film clips such as the famous crying scene of Yang Guimei at the end of *Vive L'Amour*; Xiaokang's mother misses his father in the *7 to 400 Blows* and the ticket seller came to the screening room to see the peaches offered as a birthday present in the *Good Bye, Dragon Inn* are shot with fixed long shots.

In the film *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*, there is a fixed long shot of about three minutes. The whole frames is composed of three parts, namely the cigarette end on the left, the peach in the middle and the ticket seller on the right, which accounts for half of the frames. It takes about three minutes to divide the characters' emotions into two segments: In the first section, the conductor looked at the peach, which lasted about 2 minutes and 18 seconds; in the second section, the conductor gets up and leaves, which totals about 21 seconds. In the old theater, the conductor came to the screening room with the mood of missing and looked at the intact peaches offered as a birthday present, he fell to thinking. There's not a single line in the whole scene. Only the conductor blinks from time to time, and the sound of a film projected outside the frame reminds the audience that this is not a static picture. Fixed long shots bring the static property. As the third perspective, the audience also stared at the intact peaches for 2 minutes and 18 seconds, full of sadness and frustration. The audience's frustration reached its peak when the conductor stood up to take away the peach. When the frame is still, there is only the sound of the movie playing outside the frame, silence is more powerful than words.

In the static fixed long shots, the director's subjective intention is less. The shot can record more objectively, and at the same time, the expression space of the image is also expanded. The six-minute scene at the end of *Vive L'Amour* is divided into three parts, depending on the mood of the actors, from sobbing to wailing, from wailing to calm, and finally from calm to sobbing. This whole fine and smooth inner analysis, Tsai does not show through a set of shots, but chooses fixed long shots with medium close shot. The camera, like the eyes of the audience, followed Yang Guimei crying for six minutes. Desperate for life and love, she sought solace with nicotine for a moment, but love did not live forever and there was no romance in reality. She could only hide in the corner and howl. Fixed long shots with the static property makes it easier for the audience to slowly experience the emotional ups and downs of the characters in the film. The six-minute fixed shooting reveals the alienation and indifference between people, as well as the sadness of Taiwan's industrial society.

Tsai Ming-liang's fixed long shots have certain requirements for the actor's acting skills. The layering of the actor's acting can weaken the dull feeling brought by a single long shot, while the static nature of fixed shots allows the audience to immerse themselves in the story and feel the sadness of the protagonist in the same situation as the protagonist.

2.2. THE LONG SHOTS WITH DEPTH OF FIELD: RICHNESS

Depth of field usually refers to the range of clarity before and after the plane of focus reflected in the final screen image [Boebke \(1994\)](#). The long shots of depth of field adopts the technique of large depth of field to shoot, and both the front and back images of the depth position are seen in the frame. The depth of field shots often used by Tsai Ming-liang is to change the field of the depth space by making the moving object move into or away from the camera [Rui \(2013\)](#). Long shots with depth of field are also one of Tsai's frequent shots in his films, such as Xiaokang cutting his hand with a window glass in *Rebels of the Neon God*; Xiaokang's mother cutting durian in *The River*; the hero and heroine spy on each other in *The Hole*, have adopted the long shots with depth of field shooting.

In the film *Rebels of the Neon God*, Xiaokang breaks his hand and runs to the bathroom from the deepest part of the picture, with his mother in a daze on the sofa in the foreground left and his father eating at the dining table in the middle of the picture. When Xiaokang's mother ran to the bathroom to ask him why his hand was injured, his father also just put down the bowl and came to the door of the bathroom. As his father approached the bathroom door, his mother hurried out of the bathroom and across the living room to the right in the foreground of the picture to get the medicine cabinet. When his mother went back to the bathroom, his father went back to the deepest part of the picture, which was Xiaokang's room, to see how Xiaokang had been injured. Meanwhile, the conversation between Xiaokang and his mother in the bathroom gets louder and louder, and the father returns to the bathroom door again and berates Xiaokang for breaking the window in the room. The detailed long shot of depth of field ends with a diatribe from Xiaokang's mother. The performance of the picture is divided into three areas: front, middle and back. According to the process of Xiaokang's mother and father arriving at the toilet twice to check the situation, it can be concluded that there is a deep gap between Xiaokang and his parents, especially the relationship between Xiaokang and his father is very stiff. Xiaokang's father walked into the bathroom twice, the whole way without a word of concern for Xiaokang and all are scolding and abuse, the grudge between Xiaokang and his father is clearly visible.

The long shots with depth of field has rich sense of layer, which can be divided into front, middle and back three areas, forming a deep image space. For example, in the film *The River*, Xiaokang's mother in the front right of the picture cuts durian for Xiaokang to eat. After a long corridor, Xiaokang's father walked out of the bathroom to look at it, and then into the balcony. While Xiaokang's mother was massaging Xiaokang, his father came out of the balcony into the room and closed the door. In this long shot, the director uses the scheduling of characters and the degree of light and shade to divide the front and back space. Xiaokang and his mother formed a space, Xiaokang's father formed a space alone. The two spaces do not intersect, the relationship between father and son is self-evident. Simple depth-of-field shots have only two front and back areas, but they convey a lot of information. Depth of field shots reintroduce ambiguous features into the picture structure [Songrong \(2013\)](#). Tsai's method of processing such depth of field shots is to use long distance or panoramic shooting without zoom processing, so that the environment of the characters can be exposed as completely as possible, and the characters can also be arranged in a hierarchical manner in the frames. Tsai Ming-liang prefers to use long shots with depth of field to show the relationship between family members, especially between father and son. This is reflected in films such as *Rebels of the Neon God* and *7 to 400 Blows*.

In Tsai Ming-liang's long shots with depth of field, the frames content is very rich. The shooting of large depth of field and the scene scheduling of characters can weaken the dull feeling brought by a single long shot. It is precisely because the long shot of depth of field brings the richness of the picture, completes the scheduling of the frames content and scene, and gives a single long shot a sense of hierarchy.

2.3. THE LONG SHOTS IN MOTION: NATURALNESS

Tsai Ming-liang's film has fewer moving shots than fixed shots...With the breakthrough and innovation in the style of films such as *The Skywalk Is Gone* and *The Wayward Cloud*, motion shot began to be cleverly used by Tsai again and was often combined with space scheduling to form a very comprehensive long motion shot [Ru \(2007\)](#).

In the film *The Skywalk Is Gone*, the shot of Xiang Qi looking for the sound source is a long motion shot. Starting with the motionless monk in the crowd, Xiang Qi enters the painting from the noisy crowd. When the camera shot to Xiang Qi, she closely followed, Xiang Qi eagerly forward, when the sound of "di di" outside the painting, Xiang Qi noticed and turned to find the source of the sound. Following Xiangqi, the camera returned to the position of the monk at the beginning, and finally ended with "watching" Xiangqi. This long moving shot with rich picture information naturally records the complete behavior track of the protagonist Xiangqi, and clearly shows the relationship between the protagonist and the environment, as well as the mental state of the protagonist at the moment.

Tsai Ming-liang's long moving shots can be accurately and naturally displayed in both time and space, reducing the dull feeling brought by a single long shot. The natural feature of the moving long shot makes it easier for the audience to understand the relationship between the protagonist and the environment and the spiritual world of the protagonist at this moment.

3. THE FUNCTION OF LONG SHOTS IN TSAI MING-LIANG'S FILMS

Long shots have unique space-time advantages. Shooting duration refers to the duration of events, which is unified in space and time. Therefore, compared with other shots, long shots are more likely to move the audience in terms of narrative, lyricism, and expressive expression.

3.1. NARRATIVE FUNCTION: KEEP IT REAL

Montage highlights the structure of the story and expresses the theme with the connection between shots, while long shots reflect the director's intention with the objective reality of the images [Rui \(2013\)](#). Tsai Ming-liang made his own attempt in long shots and montage explorations. There are many changes in the long shot in the movie. The first is the change of scene, the lens changes with the movement of the characters. Secondly, in addition to the one-shot shooting method, more meaning is conveyed through the connection between shots. In the film *Vive L'Amour*, a long shot shows the whole process of Yang Guimei and Chen Zhaorong's meeting and falling in love. This long shot consists of 7 shot segments, as shown in [Table 2](#). (Chen Zhaorong for short Chen, Yang Guimei for short Yang):

Table 2

Table 2 <i>Vive L'Amour</i>				
Mirror number	Place	Scene	Shots type	Frames content
1	Beverage shop	Mid-shot	Fixed lens	In the beverage store, Chen looked around at the table by himself. After a while, Yang passed by him with a drink and sat down at the table beside him. Chen took a look at her, Yang lit a cigarette and Chen looked at Yang from time to time. Yang put out her cigarette and walks out of the frame from the right holding the bag. Chen looked in the direction where Yang had gone.
2	Women's lavatory	Panorama and medium shot	Track-up shot 、 Fixed lens	Yang came out of the toilet and went to the sink to wash her hands and touch up her makeup.
3	Beverage shop	Panorama	Fixed lens	Both Chen and Yang are not in their seats.
4	Outside the department store	Mid-shot	Track-up shot	Yang looks at the poster in front of the movie. Chen walks into the frame from the right. Yang found Chen. Chen walked behind Yang and stopped to look at the same poster. Chen walked out of the frame from the left.
5	Outside the department store	Panorama	Pan shot	Yang walked past the window of the department store.
6	Outside the department store	Panorama	Track-up shot	Chen walks to the lens and stops behind the pillar on the right to smoke. Then Yang enters the frame from the left and finds Chen behind the pillar.
7	Outside the department store	Mid-shot	Fixed lens	Yang stops in front of the window, and Chen walks from the depth of the frame to the telephone booth on the left. Chen makes a phone call. Soon, Young enters the frame from the left and wanders twice in front of the phone booth.

Shots 1, 4, and 7 are long shots that last more than one minute. Each long shot is paired with two short shots. This combination of shots makes the feelings of the couple fluctuate, and the fluctuations form the same rhythm, that is, the ambiguity between the two gradually heats up, and finally ends with a long shot. The internal rhythm of the seventh long shot is consistent with that of the previous shots, and it is more informative than the previous shots. First of all, the camera lens follows Chen Zhaorong's path to the telephone booth on the street, with the bustling people as the background of the frames. With the shaking of the camera lens, the content of the frames becomes richer, and the space where Yang Guimei lives is also revealed. Finally, the camera lens fixed to Chen Zhaorong phone screen, Yang Guimei into the frame as the foreground to walk back and forth, then out of the frame. The scheduling of these scenes forms the rhythm of the long shot itself and matches the rhythm of the previous shot. In the narrative, it is also unified with the information of the previous shot, rendering the ambiguous state of the two people to the climax point. This ambiguous scene, without the hint of language, music, objects, etc.,

completes the narrative through the director's scene scheduling in one long shot after another, which makes the ambiguous performance of the two of them incisively and vividly, which also pave the way for the two of them to fall in love in the house to be sold.

3.2. LYRIC FUNCTION: HEIGHTEN ATMOSPHERE

In the first 20 minutes or so of *The Hole*, there are no lines, only snippets of the characters' lives. Over the next 30 minutes of the film, there are two conversations. One is Yang Guimei let Xiaokang at home such as repairman repair "holes"; In another, Yang Guimei warns Xiaokang not to use the toilet. The purpose of the two dialogues is to move the plot forward, and when the purpose of the dialogue is achieved, the lines disappear immediately. Then comes background sounds that occupy a large amount of space in the film, such as cicadas, drinking water, high heels tapping on the ground, eating instant noodles, flushing the toilet, etc. The noisy sounds cover people's voices and become the subject of the frames. However, people who should be the subject lose the function of language, as well as the communication of thoughts and emotions. People are in a state of "aphasia" for a long time under the fixed long shot of medium and close range. The alienation between the characters and the environment impacts the lonely heart of the characters. It's the character's six minutes of crying in front of the camera lens when he realizes that his love is dead, or the *All Over the River Rouge* while he's at the height of his anger and anger while holding a billboard. People's "aphasia" and inner emotions are expressed through a long shot. Such long-term emotional rendering enables the audience to both see and feel.

The dirty, closed and lonely living space (building) is a wonderful portrayal of the inner world of the living subject (modern man), and a vivid image externalization of the invisible and untouchable inner universe of urban modern humans [Luyan \(2006\)](#). As the concentrated embodiment of the industrialization development of post-modern society, city accurately expresses the changes of human beings in the materialistic world, that is, the alienation between people and society, the alienation between people and people and the nowhere to go. Throughout the film works of director Tsai Ming-liang, the theme expressed is always inseparable from the word loneliness. Whether it is the exploration of human nature or the depiction of social environment, loneliness runs through the film. In the film, the audience can enjoy the physical exile and spiritual loneliness. In the film *Vive L'Amour*, Tsai quietly conveys the silent loneliness of urban men and women to the audience. Li Kangsheng works like a thief and is timid. In real life, he is a thief living in others empty house. He only dares to kiss a man's face secretly when he likes him. His heart beat lonely after the kiss. Yang Guimei falls in love with Chen Zhaorong. Near the end of the film, she sits on a park bench smoking and crying. She is crying about her loneliness. Chen Zhaorong did not cry. He smoked, chain-smoking his loneliness.

3.3. IDEOGRAPHIC FUNCTION: SUBLIMATE THE THEME

Bazin advocates reality aesthetics, which ensures the integrity and authenticity of time and space through a long shooting time, so that the audience can capture the whole picture of the development of things and the relationship between characters from the complete frames. Tsai Ming-liang, adhering to the realistic aesthetics of films advocated by Bazin, shoots from the perspective of calm observation, without deliberately designing the plots of clever encounters between characters, so as to

highlight the alienation between people and the environment, to express people's loss at the moment, and to leave a lot of ideography space for the interpretation of long shots.

There are many images with ideographic functions in Tsai's films. For example, in the film *The River*, Xiaokang's inability to straighten his neck implies that the Xiaokang's sexual orientation deviates from the general public, as well as the distortion of human emotions in the increasingly developed city. In the film *The Skywalk Is Gone*, Xiang Qi loses her identity card. Identity card is the symbol of individual identity in modern society, and it is the correlation between individuals and society. The loss of identity card means the loss of social identity, and means he lost his sense of social identity. In the film *The Hole*, the growing hole is like the male and female protagonists' increasingly strong sense of loneliness. It is a metaphor that modern people are full of seclusion and snooping. The dark, damp room is like the dark, wet heart of its owner. The upper and lower parts of the room are isolated from each other, without interfering with each other.

The element of "water" appears in each of Tsai's works. "Water" has an obvious ideographic function in Tsai's films, which runs through the film and bears the function of catharsis of characters' emotions. In the "Water Trilogy", Tsai Ming-liang treats the image of "water" in a different way. In the film *Rebels of the Neon God*, water comes out of a kitchen drain and fills the room. It's dirty water. In the film *Vive L'Amour*, water is responsible for drowning Xiaokang in the bathtub, and it is also the tears that run down Yang Guimei's face when she cries. The water in the movie *The River* leaks from the ceiling, and it's a rotten, foul-smelling river. It is like an incorrigible and inescapable virus in the modern city, relentlessly invading the individual living space of modern people [Weichuan \(2014\)](#). "Water" is no longer the apparent sense of clean water to wash away dirt but mixed with impurities to flow into the pain of water. Take the movie *The River* as an example, "water" means different things to Xiao Kang's family. Contents are shown in [Table 3](#):

Table 3

Table 3 <i>The River</i>		
Role	Place	Frames content
Mother and father	Inside	When Xiaokang's father returned home, the ceiling of the house was leaking. It was late at night, and his father knocked on the upstairs door in vain. He had to move the bed and use a bucket to fetch water, but the water just dropped on the bed, wetting the bedding.
Mother	Inside	Xiaokang's mother alone at home. Outside the window, it was howling. She went upstairs to turn off the tap and went downstairs looking tired.
Xiao kang	Hotel	Xiaokang washed his body repeatedly in the bathroom.

The leakage of water from the ceiling indicates the mother's inner discontent, and the leakage of water just drops on the bed, indicating that the mother's desires are not satisfied. At the same time, as a gay father cannot be satisfied, the inner loneliness also breeds. When Xiao Kang's mother is alone at home, the wind and rain outside the window is a metaphor for her long-suppressed inner agitation. Inside, the water is overflowing, she goes upstairs not only to turn off the faucet that has not been tightened, but also to turn off her tolerance for the father and son's sexual orientation. Xiao Kang's body in the river slowly floated, suggesting that his inner homosexual complex slowly surfaced. The scene of endless showering in the hotel

is a metaphor for Xiaokang's desire to escape from his inner desire for a homosexual relationship. Xiaokang's contradictory heart represses his sexual orientation.

4. CONCLUSIONS

To this day, Tsai Ming-liang's films are meaningful and successful in the development of Taiwanese films. Undoubtedly, he has led Taiwan film aesthetics to another dimension, such as non-dramatic narrative mode and calmly looking on shooting perspective. The long shot is an important expression way to show the film world, which has great advantages in the expression of the alienation between the characters and the environment and the expression of the lonely emotion in the characters. In the medium and close-range fixed shot, the despair and sadness of the characters are obvious. As a "stranger", Tsai Ming-liang keenly observes Taiwan society, and discusses people's living conditions and the relationship between people and society with the rapid development of society through the depiction of a long shots.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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