


# A Strategic Study on the Development of Contemporary Chinese Feminist Films from Freud's "Three Essays on Sexology"

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**Abstract:** *Background:* With the rapid development of the social economy, women's status is gradually improving. Many feminist films are entering the film market. It has become a new hot topic recently. The development of feminist film theory can be traced back to the 1960s. The scholars began to pay attention to the presentation of women in films and the ideology of gender narrative in films. At the same time, its development trend rapidly expanded globally with the rise of the first feminist movement. In this process, feminist ideas also began to influence the film industry, gradually making female characters and themes important film components. *Purpose:* Feminist film theory is an important genre of contemporary film theory, originating in the 1960s. It is a theoretical school that integrates various theories and methods, such as psychoanalysis, post-structuralism, and semiotics, for comprehensive research. This article explores how feminist films should avoid existing problems and continue to develop based on Freud's theory of sexual development trends in his "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality". *Methods:* This article adopts methods such as literature review, comparative research, and case analysis to explore the future development trends of feminist films from multiple perspectives. *Results:* This article explored and analyzed the development process of feminism as portrayed in Freud's "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" and Laura Mulvey's feminist film theory from multiple aspects and proposed its future development strategies. *Conclusion:* In recent years, feminist films have been continuously developed and show diversified themes and genres. However, feminist films, both domestically and internationally, have not yet formed a complete system and corresponding theories. For example, their in-depth exploration of the core theme and innovation in films' content and themes needs development. Therefore, in response to such issues, the future development measures for feminist films are as follows: 1. Increase the proportion of female directors; 2. Increase the diversity of female characters; 3. Pay attention to women's issues and conduct in-depth exploration; 4. Enhance the innovation of its localized story; 5. Strengthen international cooperation; 6. Provide National policy support.

**Keywords:** Feminism, Three Treatises on Sexology, Feminist films, Freud, Laura Mulvey

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background

Men have dominated the Chinese society since ancient times. Throughout history, most emperors and rulers were male, while women were symbols and appendages of male power. Females' lives and deaths depended on men. The success of a country or an emperor is the glory of men. However, when a country was in danger, it was attributed to women. One such example is Yang Yuhuan. Her short and splendid life can be summarized in a short sentence: "In her heyday, she was the glory of the Tang Dynasty, and in her decline, she was the sinner of the Tang Dynasty". Even in the 21st

century, where gender equality is advocated, women are still in a disadvantaged position. The emergence of the so-called "victim guilt theory" has sparked public anger. As a result, women are starting to unite, protect, and warm each other. This led to films and artworks depicting women's lives and difficulties.

The development of feminist film theory in China can be traced back to the May Fourth Movement period. At that time, some enlightened intellectuals were influenced by Western school theories and began advocating feminism in China. They discovered the negative impact of gender inequality on Chinese society, which gradually led to the awakening of Chinese women (Zhang, 2014). With the gradual advancement of the socialist revolution, China has begun to liberate women. However, due to the influence of the traditional Chinese culture of male superiority and female inferiority, there are many opponents. This friction hinders women's liberation movement. There is still a significant gap between domestic feminism and feminist research in terms of theoretical construction and international standards. Localization still needs to be explored.

With the Internet the "she economy" has begun to rise. The so-called "she economy" refers to the further improvement of women's economic and social status. This "she economy" has increased females' purchasing power. Women have gradually become the main consumers in the economic market. It is precisely because of the rise of "her economy" that women are gradually guiding and driving the consumer market economy. Many brands are paying attention to the huge consumer group of women. The brands winning women's trust will win the world. The development and promotion of this phenomenon have brought opportunities for the development of feminist films in China. Overall, the arrival of the "she economy" has provided a huge market and rare opportunities for the rise of Chinese feminist films (Tang, 2018).

## 1.2 Research Purpose

This article explores the development process and future development strategies of feminist films starting from Freud's "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality". Firstly, Freud demonstrated in his book that the development of female sexual desire is a highly normal physiological process. He placed women's sexual needs in a positive position. However, his research is still incomplete. He analyzed many aspects of women from a male perspective, which still puts women in a lower position. Secondly, the feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey has greatly influenced feminism and its film development. Her article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" laid a solid theoretical foundation for the rise and development of feminist films in the future. She used Freud's psychoanalytic theory of women as the foundation and thus discovered the theory of "visual pleasure" in narrative films (Xiao, 2016). The two theories complement each other and provide a theoretical and practical basis for the subsequent development of feminist film theory.

## 1.3 The limitations of the development of feminist films

The secondary sexual characteristics of both males and females mature with age, and at the same time, a male-centered culture begins to permeate into various aspects. Since ancient times, Chinese society has been dominated by male dominance. Therefore, in contemporary society, most films, TV shows, and artworks are centered around male characters, which seems to have become an eternal proposition. It seems that only the growth and development of men can conform to mainstream values and play a role in educating the people. This is because the growth and development of male characters is considered essential. On the contrary, female characters' growth experiences or developmental processes are intentionally or unintentionally hidden. They become a supporting factor on the path of male development, which is the main reason for the lack of contemporary feminist films (Sun, 2022). Men still dominate in most films. Male supremacy still exists in films, although they disguise themselves as females for the

market and female audience demand. This phenomenon limits the quantity and influence of feminist films, thereby hindering their progress and development.

In recent years, most feminist films that have gained popularity and high box office revenue have been adapted from other classic foreign films. Remakes are so popular because the original film's overall story is complete and has dramatic conflicts that attract the audience, reducing the workload for screenwriters and allowing them to create a film with less effort. However, due to the excessive number of remakes of domestic films in recent years, their quality has declined. This led to the scarcity of original films, reducing audience's interest. This is especially true for audiences who have already watched the original film and are already familiar with the direction and end of the story (Zhou, 2023). The box office issue is very worrying (Zhou, 2023).

Feminist films have recently entered the Chinese film market and contributed to its development. However, the emergence of new things has its shortcomings. Although female films have existed in China for a long time, they have not developed systematically and have not attracted widespread social attention. I believe that with the development of society and the rise of women's power, Chinese feminist films will gradually strengthen their innovation and create more excellent film and television works unique to China.

**Table 1: Feminist films adapted from foreign films in recent years**

Release time	Movie Name	source	core theme of the movie
2023	Lost in the stars	The Traps Set for Single Men ((Former Soviet Union)	Love
2023	Who's The Suspect	7 Days( Korea)	Family affection
2021	The Door Lock	Door Lock( Korea)	Safe living for women alone
2020	All about my mother	The Most Beautiful Goodbye( Korea)	Family affection
2021	My Love	On Your Wedding Day(Korea)	Love

#### 1.4 Research Method

This article mainly adopts the literature research method. It uses Freud's work " Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality " as the main reference to study the embryonic development of feminism. It provides a basic explanation of human sexuality. This theory laid the foundation for the embryonic development of feminism. Later, this theory was applied by feminist theorist Laura Mulvey. She formed her theory based on Freud's theory. Her work " Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema " also became an important reference for studying the development of feminist film theory in this article.

Secondly, comparative research and case analysis methods were also used. By analyzing the differences between the adapted films and comparing its versions, it was found that the Chinese version did not truly understand the film's core theme. Instead, it used conventional copying and formatted plots for remakes and did not adapt to Chinese. This research method makes it easier to demonstrate the shortcomings of the Chinese feminist films objectively and facilitates the exploration of their future development strategies.

## 2. Literature review

Theme and characteristics: showcasing women's life experiences, challenging gender discrimination, expressing feminist ideas and values.



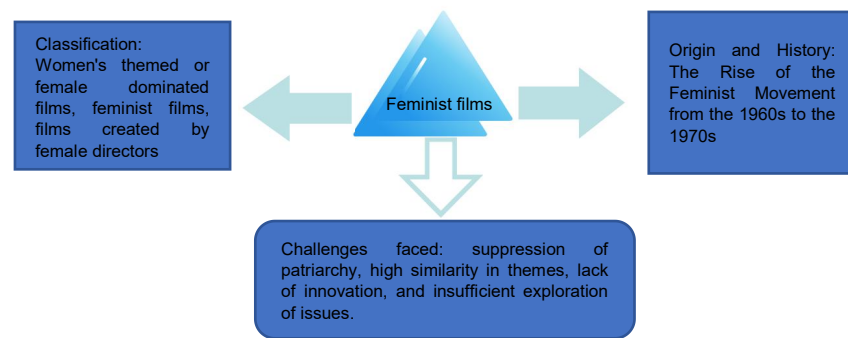


Figure 1: Feminist films

The development process of feminist film theory can be traced back to the 1960s. It is an important component of the feminist social movement. Various feminist schools of thought emerged during this period. One such example is radical feminism. It describes/presents an extreme attitude and emphasizes the special connection between women and nature. The liberal feminist school advocates rationality and equality for all, emphasizing women's freedom. Their common goal is to fight for women's equal rights with men and call for the elimination of social discrimination and oppression faced by women.

In the 1970s, feminist film theory was officially formed. It is deeply influenced by classic works from the women's liberation movement, including the following works:

Beauvoir was a representative figure of the second feminist movement in the West. Her theoretical ideas are still limited to the binary opposition circle of "male and female" (Guo, 2023). In "The Second Sex", she clarified the historical context of women's oppression and concluded that women's freedom is restricted due to historical constraints by men. Finally, she traced the continuation of patriarchal consciousness in historical culture by exploring past mythological stories. She proposed the path of true liberation beyond absolute other existence and towards free existence (Liang 2022).

Famous female writer Eric Rong once said, "Betty Friedan activated feminism in America". She is highly praised for it because of her book "The Feminine Mystique". The book has made outstanding contributions to the feminist movement, and it is considered one of the most influential books of the 20th century and a classic theoretical work in the feminist movement (Shen, 2013). This book explores the role and status of women in society. It focuses on the dilemma of "namelessness" faced by a large group of housewives. They are forced to accept the roles society and the family assigned them. Since they rely on their husbands economically and emotionally, they feel that their existence is of no value, and therefore, they have no real "name" that belongs to them.

Kate Millet's book "Sexual Politics" begins with gender differences between men and women. It redefines the importance of re-understanding gender identity in establishing the image of every woman. She broke away from the traditional male-centered creative approach, weakened the authority and credibility of men in portraying female images in literary works, and began to analyze their unique experiences and problems from a female perspective. She constructed a feminist reading and criticism approach (Wu 2003).

The early research included Laura Mulvey's article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema". She was inspired by *Duel in the Sun* film to write "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", emphasizing the influence of visual elements in movies on audience emotions and cognition and improving her film theory (Penley, C 1988).

As Laura Mulvey said, in the 1980s, China's modernization transformation encountered problems, and the country began to use self denial in various aspects such as economy, politics, and culture as a starting point, blindly learning foreign theories, which was a major obstacle to its development at that time. (Han, 2013) These theoretical

research findings provide powerful tools for the ideological development of gender narrative in Chinese films and drive its further development.

In the 1980s, feminist film theory entered China and attracted widespread attention and discussion. The main topics include the modernization of film language, Chinese film aesthetics, and the national style of films. In her article "Invisible Women: Women in Contemporary Chinese Cinema and Women's Movies," Professor Dai Jinhua deeply interpreted the female images in Chinese cinema and the characteristics of female director creations from 1949 to 1996. This research became the starting mark of Chinese feminist cinema and further promoted the development of Chinese feminist film theory. (Dai, 1994)

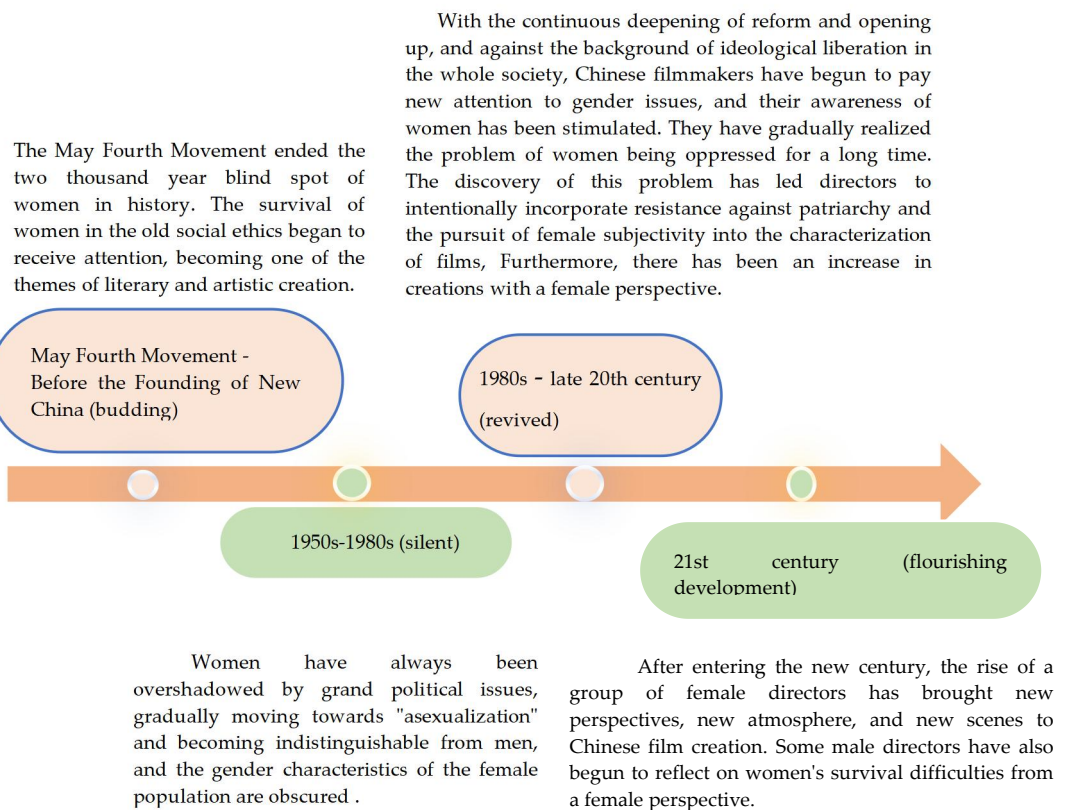


Figure 2: Development of Chinese feminist films

Table 2: Development process of feminist film theory

Time	Name	Author	Status	Disadvantage
1905	Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality	Freud	sprout	Still exploring women from a male perspective
1960s	Feminist social movement		beginning	Some extreme feminists may overemphasize the superiority of women and overlook the rights of men. This extremist viewpoint may lead to social division and disrupt the harmony of gender relations.
1970s	The feminist film theory has officially formed		Formally formed	Its theoretical structure was influenced by the feminist social movement at that time, which

				excessively elevated the status of women, leading to a deviation in the theoretical perspective.
1949	the second sex	Simone Beauvoir	It is hailed as the "most sound, rational, and wise book ever to discuss women", and even revered as the "Bible" of Western women, known as the "Women's Bible".	Beauvoir believed that women are still subordinate to men and are an intermediate product between men and those who have been castrated.
1963	The Feminine Mystique	Betty Friedan	It is hailed as a classic work of American liberal feminism, which has permanently rewritten the social structure of countries such as the United States.	Overemphasizing the independence of women while neglecting the responsibilities that men should bear. At the same time, their views will hurt some housewives.
1970	Sexual Politics	Kate Millett	Hailed as "a milestone in feminist criticism".	She only attributes gender inequality to patriarchy, ignoring the influence of other factors.
1975	Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema	Laura Mulvey	The Founding Work of Feminist Film Theory	The theory of male as the subject of observation lacks some explanation of female as the subject, and lacks certain persuasiveness.
1990	Feminism and Chinese Women's Movies	Yang Yuanying	Introducing feminist film theory into China	Without a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the future development of women's films in China, the theoretical system is still immature.

The above table shows that feminism was developed in foreign countries. However, the development of feminist film theory in China was relatively slow. It was not until recent years that feminist films began to rise on a large scale. As a result, the shortcomings of their development gradually emerged. Men still dominate most feminist films. Although the embryonic form of feminism can be seen, male supremacy is deeply rooted in its core. The second is the lack of local innovation. In recent years, most films with a good reputation at the box office have been adapted and remade based on foreign films. This overhead adaptation makes it difficult to bring the audience into the story.

To enhance the development of Chinese feminist films, innovation, attention to female-related problems in Chinese society, and an in-depth exploration of Chinese feminist films are required. The cultivation of female directors and screenwriters should be emphasized. They should be encouraged to create realistic and high-quality films showcasing women's inner selves, improving films' innovation and social value.

### 3. A Brief Analysis of the Sprouts of Feminism Shown in Freud's Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality

#### 3.1 The Origin of Human Primitive Sexual Instinct

The narrow interest in pathological sexuality and sexual physiology gradually gave way to a broader interest in normal sexuality (Spector Person, 2005). Therefore, Freud's theory gained public attention.

Feminism was initially influenced by psychoanalytic theory. This theory was established by an Austrian psychologist, Freud, in the early 20th century. Freud's theory of mind was not initially widely recognized in society. Over time, his theory attracted a group of followers interested in psychoanalysis, and thus, related theories were developed (Wang, 2023). Freud attributed the internal psychological factors to the suppression of sexual desire by parents during childhood. He described that based on parent's perspective, sex is a physiological phenomenon that should not occur during childhood, and thus established the "unconscious instinct theory". He also proposed "pansexualism", which refers to the fact that all human behaviors from birth to oldage/death have more or less sexual connotations. He referred to both human sexual impulses and animal foraging impulses as libido (libido) , or libido, emphasizing a conscious drive for pleasure (Zhang, 2012).

### 3.2 The Birth and Development Forms of Sexual Desire in Childhood

In the initial human view, it was believed that sexual instinctual behavior did not exist in early childhood. It made authors overlook the most primitive stage of life - the early childhood stage. Freud systematically elaborated on the reasons and manifestations of human sexual instincts in the early stages of birth from multiple aspects, such as the expression of sexual desire in early childhood, sexual goals in early childhood, developmental stages of sexual tissue in early childhood, and sources of sexual desire in early childhood.

In the following chapters, Freud talks about the transformation of human sexual consciousness during adolescence. The sexual consciousness of a person in early childhood belongs to an unconscious and unconscious sexual phenomenon. Due to age and immature development of sexual organs, they do not have a rational and complete understanding of their sexual consciousness and sexual behavior. With adolescence, they gradually begin to have sexual awareness and undergo a series of changes in their sexual cognition, as they are destined to provide a rational explanation for early childhood sexual behavior in a normal form.

### 3.3 Differentiation of Sexual Desire between Adolescent Men and Women

Human sexual desire is innate and a normal physiological developmental phenomenon. Teenagers in our country enter puberty from the age of 11 to 12, with 17 to 18 years old and 22 to 24 years old being considered late adolescence. After entering puberty, teenagers gradually develop and mature their sexual organs, which leads to sexual needs and the onset of sexual activity. This is the generation of their sexual desire. It can be seen that sexual desire is a normal physiological phenomenon in adolescents (Jiang, 2006). During this period, the sexual and gender awareness of men and women began to differentiate, and curiosity and exploration towards the opposite sex emerged.

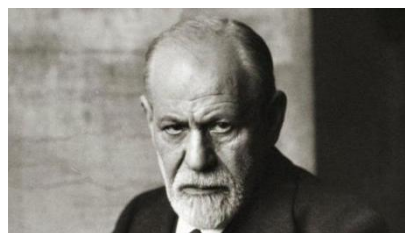
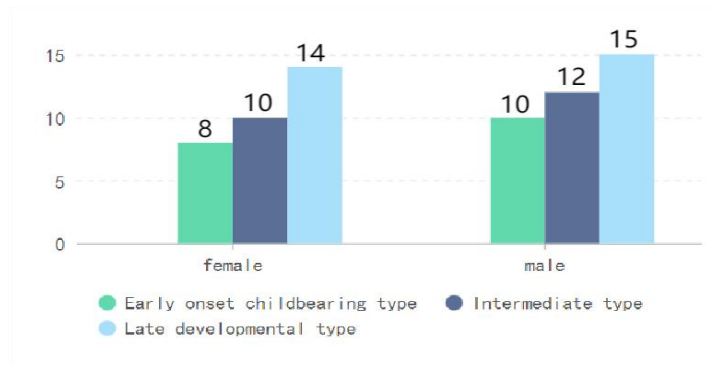


Figure 3: Freud



**Figure 4: Physiological Development Schedule of Adolescents**

The castration plot and penis envy are two important concepts. Boys believe that having male genitalia is a normal phenomenon, and when they discover that a girl lacks this part, they will develop a strong sense of resistance. They will try to find various substitutes to replace the missing penis in the girl's body to achieve psychological identification. In Freud's view, the penis has a unique advantage for men, and the lack of penis in women is a natural defect. Therefore, they develop envy or even jealousy towards men. He also believes that the low status of women is a very natural phenomenon and that women should not be obsessed with breaking through the gender gap. He also believes that penis envy is a pathological psychology that exists in women from a young age. This theory still puts men on a high ground, completely ignoring women's desire for equality and respect. This is a theoretical flaw. Gender freedom and equality are important issues that deserve attention (Xu, 2009).

Even renowned theorists and psychologists like Freud were unable to completely break free from the cycle of gender differences and male supremacy when studying theories related to gender. This indicates a significant influence of the social atmosphere. However, Freud's ability as a male to objectively analyze and face the sexual needs of women has made great progress. His classic theories have also laid a solid foundation for future research on gender relations and related theories.

#### **4. Laura Mulvey's Feminist Film Theory**

Laura Mulvey is an influential feminist film theorist. Her most famous viewpoint is published in her article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema". The cinematic shots represent the gaze of men. This article uses psychoanalysis as its theoretical basis to discover the charm of movies (Zhu, 2014). In "Fetishism and Curiosity", she integrated Marxist and psychoanalytic theories into her feminist film theory, making it more complete and scientific (Song, 2020).

##### **4.1 On the Theory of Film Audience**

Laura Mulvey divides the viewing patterns of movie audiences into two types: voyeurism and fetishism. These two terms are based on Freud's Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality. Freud's theory greatly influences Laura Mulvey. However, Laura Mulvey has made a new understanding of Freud's theory of male supremacy, taking its essence and dross into his theory, and it has become a new concept.

The voyeuristic viewing mode uses a male perspective as the main perspective. They watch movies to satisfy their desire for voyeurism toward women. Their sexual instincts influence this behavior. Men are born with a strong desire for women. However, sex was an extremely obscure concept in society at that time. Therefore, to meet their sexual and physiological needs, they watch movies because it was a relatively private matter. They can watch their favorite female actors. It is the first form of voyeuristic viewing.



The so-called object worship viewing mode refers to the audience replacing the reproduced character with something they consider safe and satisfactory, and this viewing mode only focuses on appearance.

#### 4.2 Gender differences in visual pleasure

Laura Mulvey's discourse on "visual pleasure" implies the basic assumption that the viewer of the movie is male, while Freud's theory of sexual instincts and Lacan's theory of mirrors provide theoretical foundations for it. Freud believed that humans have a sexual instinct to peep, and the playback of movies provides audiences with a private and undisturbed peeping space. It satisfies their desire to peep without causing moral constraints psychologically. Furthermore, in mainstream movies, the object presented is a woman. It is also one of their behaviors to satisfy men's desire to peep. She further pointed out that in the current social environment with severe gender differentiation between men and women, men usually project their gaze onto the body of the perfect woman they imagine, and women are often shaped into highly visually impactful images to attract male attention. This is an objectification of and a great disrespect to women (Wang, 2010).

However, the drawback of Laura Mulvey's theory is that it takes men as the subject of observation and lacks some explanation of women as the subject, lacking persuasiveness (Lin, 2023).

#### 4.3 Feminist Film Criticism

The theoretical core of Laura Mulvey's article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" lies in deconstructing the visual pleasure of classic Hollywood narrative films, to unravel their underlying patriarchal social supremacy. The main theme of feminist film criticism (Wang, 2012) is to expose and criticize gender discrimination on the screen and to elucidate the unconscious anti-female nature of films in a patriarchal society <place in-text citation here>. It focuses on the relationship between the audience and the film, proposes the theory of film gaze, and breaks through the research methods of American feminist film theory, becoming the founder of a new female film theory.



Figure 5: Laura Mulvey

### 5. Analysis of Contemporary Excellent Feminist Film Works

Table 3: Box Office Rankings of Domestic Movies (Excerpt)

Ranking	Film Title	Release date	Box Office Revenue
1	<The Battle at Lake Changjin>	2021-9-30	577,574.94
2	<Wolf Warriors II>	2017-7-27	568,874.06
3	<Hi, Mom>	2021-02-12	541,329.98
12	<Lost in the stars>	2023-06-22	352,669.30

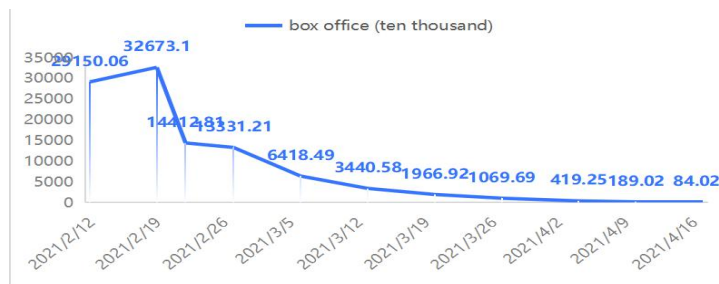


Figure 6: Box office changes for "Hi, Mom" (excerpt)

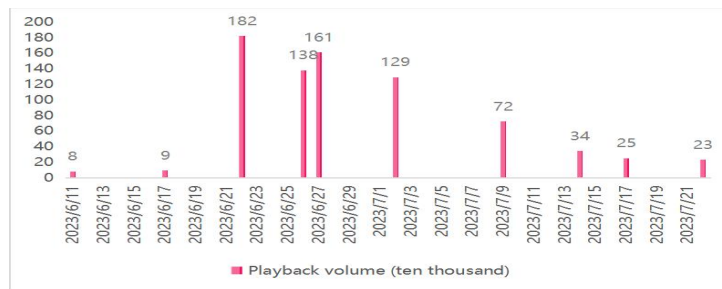
Throughout the box office rankings of Chinese film history, most top-ranking films are theme films with male characters. This is because collectivism and patriotism are the most important things in traditional Chinese beliefs. Therefore, films that promote positive energy and pay tribute to heroes and martyrs are naturally more popular. When watching these films, national pride is born from within. It is something that Chinese cinema should be proud of. Its drawback is that the main characters saving the country are mostly male. The entire story is also dominated by male characters exploring their growth process, which is also related to China's historical tradition. On the contrary, the success of anything and the establishment of a country have never been attributed to a single gender role. When men charge forward, women serve as their powerful logistical support in the rear, and the existence of either side is indispensable. However, people often remember those standing at the front of the war but forget the women who silently contributed behind them. Female heroes, such as Liu Hulan, Jiang Jie, and others, exist in history. They are strong and fight bravely against enemies. Their heroic deeds are equally worthy of praise and memory for future generations. The word hero has never been exclusive to men, and the power unleashed by women is equally powerful. Therefore, in the future, feminist films will continue to develop and fill the gap in film genres.

However, if only the main theme films occupy most of the box office, the genre may appear too singular. In 2021, the film "Hi, Mom" directed by new female director Jia Ling, broke this deadlock. Its box office jumped to third place in domestic box office rankings. The success of "Hi, Mom" has given countless female filmmakers hope and motivation to move forward. Nevertheless, the proportion of female films in Chinese film genres is still very low, so the development theory of female films in China is not yet mature. The following will compare and analyze the development trend and shortcomings of feminist films in recent years from two aspects: male and female guided feminist films.

### 5.1 Feminist films guided by men

Table 4: Feminist films directed by men

Release time	Film Title	Country	Types of films
2023.6.22	<Lost in the stars>	China	Suspense、 Affectional film
2021.11.19	<The Door Lock>	China	Thriller film、 Crime films
2021.9.19	<All About My Mother>	China	Feature film、 Family film
2018.8.22	<On Your Wedding Day>	South Korea	Feature film、 Affectional film
2001.10.19	<Mulholland Dr.>	America、 France	Suspense、 Thriller film
1995.3.25	<Love Letter>	Japan	Feature film、 Affectional film
2023.11.24	<Beyond the Clouds>	China	Feature film



**Figure 7: Daily views of materials for "Lost in the Stars"**

The suspenseful film "Lost in the Stars" is undoubtedly the dark horse at the box office this year, with high daily material views. High box office films, such as "hot selling products" and "popular culture phenomena", are typical cases of the film industry and social popular culture. "Lost in the Stars" relies on precise type selection. Clear market positioning and clever hot topic correlation have successfully achieved box office conversion (Yu, 2023). This film is so popular and grossed 3.5 billion yuan at the box office due to changes in the social environment. With the improvement in women's social status, many industries are paying attention to women's social groups. The film focuses on the strong friendship between the female protagonist and her best friend. It is a touching plot and enables her to grasp the traffic code of "women" successfully. This is a female film directed and produced by a male and does not prioritize male chauvinism, which is surprising for the audience. They used a male perspective to tell how it deceived women's emotions, providing an "emotional anti-fraud" course for female audiences. The constant reversal of suspense and detail settings further enriched the film's content's ups and downs, grasping the audience's attention. The film is adapted from a real-life social hot topic —the Thai pregnant woman falling off a cliff case. It can better resonate with the audience's emotions and increase the number of views of the hot topic, giving the audience a certain warning while also having high social significance.

With the development of the feminist film market, many male directors have begun to enter this unfamiliar field, characterized by viewing women as "objects of desire" under the male-dominated social and cultural mechanism. They try to use a female perspective as the main perspective in creating and filming movies and try to approach the general direction of feminism as much as possible. However, they are not women. They do not fully understand these issues from women's perspective. That is why these films are not comprehensive and profound. The patriarchal films like "Beyond the Clouds" disuse feminism. Firstly, the act of changing an alcoholic father to an alcoholic mother angered the audience. Secondly, the creators ignored that women in mountainous areas lack educational opportunities. However, they portrayed female students as ignorant and idle, applied Western capitalism to Eastern society, and did not adapt to local conditions. Finally, Teacher Zhang Guimei endured the pain and persisted in finding a way for these girls to grow and develop. Behind this, it was her belief as an excellent Communist Party member that supported her. However, in the film, it became a reflection of her deceased husband. This film appears to be paying tribute to Teacher Zhang Guimei, but in reality, it elevates the importance of male characters and is a typical negative teaching material. Many films use the theme of promoting women to showcase the status of men. They believe that men will occupy the primary position in women's lives and are considered their spiritual pillar. Little do they know that any woman has independent thoughts and values. She has the right to pursue self-worth and dreams. Such shoddy and disrespectful works will lose recognition from audiences and the market.

## 5.2 Feminist films guided by women

Table 5: Feminist films directed by women

Release time	Film Title	Country	Types of films
2017.11.24	<Angels Wear White>	China	Feature film
2023.11.1	<Who's The Suspect>	China	suspense, Crime
2019.5.19	<Portrait of a Lady on Fire>	France	Feature film, affectional film (lesbian)
2011.4.20	<Tomboy>	France	Feature film
2016.10.14	<Certain Women>	America	Feature film
2021.10.31	<Homage>	South Korea	Feature film
2021.2.12	<Hi, Mom>	China	Feature film, Family film
2004.12.4	<Dogs and cats>	Japan	Feature film
2022.11.18	<She Said>	America	Feature film

In recent years, public opinion has gradually focused on women's issues. Female-themed film and television works have also diversified. The movie "Hi, Mom" has become one of the iconic movies in recent years. The success of this movie has shown us a good trend in the development of female cinema, which is gratifying. Behind its popularity, we see the rise of a team of female producers, actors, audiences, and the enhancement of female directors' narrative discourse power (Tian, 2023). Its director, Jia Ling, became the highest-grossing female director in Chinese film history. As a new director, she had some shortcomings. She moved the audience with her most sincere love and longing for her mother, making the audience feel the touching power of women. Meanwhile, Hollywood has also announced plans to remake the film this year, which undoubtedly affirms the global expansion of Chinese cinema. Hollywood has always been an important center for the global film industry and a dream for countless filmmakers. Its recognition signifies that Chinese cinema has gained a certain international influence.

Overall, the success of "Hi, Mom" and its Hollywood remake indicate that Chinese cinema is gradually moving towards the world. This is an important milestone in China's film industry's development and a major leap in Chinese women's films. It provides confidence and encouragement for other Chinese filmmakers. We have reason to believe that more excellent Chinese films will go abroad and go global soon.

The rise of female directors means they no longer shoot films to cater to the audience's desire to watch and box office profits. On the contrary, they consciously explore unique ways based on their subjective consciousness, which is exclusive to women and provides a window for them to express themselves differently from the logic of male-dominated discourse (Sun, 2022). The film reflects on the identity of "mother", examining women's self-selection as independent individuals from the unique perspective of "mother used to be a blooming girl". This allows us to see the growth of women's self-awareness (Zhang, 2022). Female filmmakers can better explore their inner thoughts from a female perspective. For example, director Wen Yan's "Angels Wear White" is one of the rare masterpieces that uses the sensitive topic of sexual assault on underage girls as the background of the movie story. It focuses on adolescent girls, analyzes their inner changes after being hurt and pays attention to their hidden identity and reconstruction (Zhi, 2018). Overall, this film is very sensitive and bold in its selection of themes, and has profound social significance. However, due to the influence of cultural environment, it has certain limitations in its film and television presentation,

as real events are far darker than the stories in the film. At the same time, the film contains too many metaphorical images, such as the statue of Marilyn Monroe, which may be difficult for the audience to understand when watching, so the educational role of the film is easily overlooked. (Li, 2022)

Feminist films are full of the unique emotional experiences of contemporary women. They are often more delicate and can also reflect the current situation of women in society. With the emergence and rise of female directors and filmmakers, we have seen the tremendous power of women. We believe Chinese feminist films will become more common and mature, adding a unique and bright color to Chinese cinema (Yu, 2022).

## 6. Conclusion

In recent years, violence against women increased. The Thai pregnant woman falling off a cliff on June 9, 2019, the Tangshan barbecue restaurant beating incident on June 10, 2022, and the most famous case of the Jiang Ge murder on November 3, 2016, are some notable cases. These cases have put women's safety at the forefront of the discussion. This has also led to the gradual widespread attention of women-related social issues. Women are always in a disadvantaged position and cannot fight back against the harm they have suffered. This is not as terrifying as the male-dominated public opinion of the society. They believe that the dressing of women triggers these attacks. The foolish and ridiculous "victim guilt theory" is gradually occupying women's hearts. They are becoming timid and cautious when going out. This is not the goal we have always pursued. Therefore, many film and television works that speak for women are entering the film market. Feminist films are on the rise in China.

Feminist films are full of the unique emotional experiences of contemporary women, which are often more delicate and can reflect women's situation in society. With the emergence of female directors and filmmakers, we have seen the tremendous power of women. We believe Chinese feminist films will become more common and mature, adding a unique and bright color to Chinese cinema (Yu, 2022).

Feminist films are an important branch of Chinese cinema. In a male-dominated society, women have always been in a disadvantaged position. News of women being harmed is also common in society. As a public platform, movies have become the best weapon to speak up for women.

From the feudal ideology of male supremacy to the awakening of women's self-awareness, this is the progress and growth of women. The setting of female characters in movies is the needs of the film and a projection of social culture and social concepts. The rise of feminist films is a good phenomenon, but in China, their theoretical development is still immature and has many drawbacks. China has been a male-dominated country since ancient times. Though it has developed to this day, its core has not changed. The following suggestions are proposed for the future development of feminism in China:

- 1) Increase the proportion of female directors: Encourage and support them to participate in film production. Enhance the status and influence of women in the film industry. Women can delve deeper into their inner thoughts and handle them with more delicate techniques.

- 2) Increase female characters' diversity: Break traditional gender stereotypes and empower women with more possibilities in movies.

- 3) Pay attention to women's issues and conduct in-depth exploration: Convey women's voices through movies. Pay attention to various issues of women in life. Promote social attention and respect for women's rights.

- 4) Enhance the innovation of its localized stories: Create stories about Chinese women belonging to the local community. Show the power of Chinese women to the world.

5) Strengthen international cooperation: Learn from each other's strengths and weaknesses. Create more diverse perspectives for feminist films and enhance their international influence.

6) National policy support: The government and relevant departments should provide more policy support to feminist films, such as financial support and tax incentives. This will create a good environment for developing feminist films and encourage them to create more excellent and diverse works.

Movies have the function of spreading the ideas and values of creators. As an audio-visual art, movies can intuitively and concretely display the power of women through excellent female images. They can shape the audience's aesthetic consciousness and educate the public. However, relying solely on film and television works is still meager, and those who truly feel guilty will not be affected by it. However, we can use movies as a visual and auditory medium to let more women see these hidden dangers around them. It will help increase vigilance, enhance their inner resilience, and allow them to protect themselves. With the country's and government's power, we can create a more harmonious and safe social environment for women. I also hope to see the birth of more excellent feminist films soon so that Chinese feminist films can bloom and stand tall in the world's film industry.

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