

The Narrative Art of Flying Hair

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Abstract: The novella *Flying Hair* by Ge Liang focuses on "Flying Hair" (hairdressing), which tells the story of the older generation of hairdressers who moved to Hong Kong from the mainland in the 1960s and 1970s. By interweaving narrative time and historical time, the novel uses the first-person narrative perspective to tell stories in regional dialects and the language of the times to connect readers with story characters. Using the narrative strategy of interweaving textual research with stories, fiction and non-fiction, the novel expounds the story of Hong Kong Feifa School, represented by Zhai Yucheng, and Shanghai Hairdressing School, represented by Zhuang Jinming, and the intergenerational contradiction between Zhai Yucheng and Zhai Kangran.

1. Narrative mode

In the face of this kind of narrative content with a large time and space span and complicated characters' stories, the novel carries out the narrative timeline of the past and the present at the same time. On the basis of spatial alienation, the story is perfected, which makes the relationship between characters in the novel more complicated and vivid. ^[1] First of all, the novel tells the story of "I" in chronological order. Then, "I" go to the elder brother, Zhai Jianran, and mistake Zhai Kangran for the elder brother. Finally, I witnessed the death of Master Zhai. In this narrative mode of sequential narration, the narrative mode of interjection is also adopted to slowly spread out the stories of Zhai Yucheng and Zhuang Jinming, who respectively represent Hong Kong-style flying hair and Shanghai hairdressing. Zhai Yucheng once had a high spirit when he was young, created a peacock symbolizing brilliance, and fell from the altar of infinite scenery with the development of social times and the changes of the city. The former glory and achievements did not escape the giant wheel of The Times; they "disappeared from the urban map and became a gentle era of a certain class." ^[2] became a sigh. When Chong Kam Ming moved from Shanghai to Hong Kong, he did not look up to Hong Kong, feeling that it was lame and that Shanghai was not as prosperous as it was in the past, but it was still more than adequate compared to Hong Kong today. The main thrust of taking Zhai Kangran as a disciple is to crack down on Hong Kong-style hair shops such as "Le Qun", so as to enable the Shanghai barber shop "Windsor" to gain a foothold in Hong Kong. The two barber craftsmen have made a lot of efforts in order to pass on the craft, but under the influence of the new era and modern aesthetic trends, they stick to the technical concept of the older generation. This makes "Le Qun" and "Windsor," relying on the help of many years of acquaintances, still breathe; "Le Qun" only became the obsession of the last period of time in the life of the master Zhai; "Windsor" also died, transformed into the Hong Kong Island Folk Museum used to display the era

of witness.

With the interweaving of narrative time and historical time, time, space, and characters are not fixed, which will easily lead to incomplete shaping and incomplete objective development of characters and stories. In order to avoid this situation, the author chooses the narrative perspective of the story of non-self from the first point of view, which is commonly used by Lu Xun. Ge Liang fragmented the linear time of the story, not to create a strange artistic atmosphere but to match his chosen narrative perspective and memory mode. Due to the fragmentation of memory itself, the unfolding of the story also presents narrative fragments, which are spread out in the form of scattered points on the linear time axis of the story, seemingly scattered and chaotic, but constitute a unified and stable narrative structure framework.^[3]

2. Narrative perspective

In the novel *Flying Hair*, non-self-contained stories are told from the perspective of first-person narration, which can play a relatively full role in connecting readers with the story characters and conveying the author's language under certain expressions.

"I" enters the story and scene as the narrator, and "I" goes for a haircut. Zhai Kangran helps me design a hairstyle combining the current trend and his personal aesthetics, showing his obsession with "fading" and the "gray level" of black-and-white photography. However, when Zhai saw "my" hairstyle, he said "sit low", turning Zhai Kangran's proud flying green into a clear line, no halo retreat, and said "The whole is not refreshing; good to lose the rack."^[2] And when "I" went to find Zhai Kangran after more than half a month, he could see at a glance that his polished gradient Feiqing was modified. "You see, he never let go. Everyone else is wrong, but his own old-fashioned ways are right."^[2] There are quite contradictions between the two people, not only the conflict of character, but through Zhai Fu and Zhai Kangran's insistence on hair cutting, it is the collision between the pursuit of pragmatism in Hong Kong and the pursuit of fashion in Shanghai. When the character acts as the narrator, this kind of focused narration not only allows the narrator to participate in the time process but also captures the changes in the expression of the characters present and the changes in the emotional atmosphere in the story for the first time and brings thinking and blankness to the reader without too much verbal description.

In the past, the first perspective of "I" was offside in the omniscient perspective, telling the story of Zhai Yucheng and Zhuang Jinming's master and apprentice. "I," as a person who is not present in the past story, according to logic and common sense, cannot tell the story to everyone. However, "I" narrates the story from the perspective of God through perspective transformation, so that "I" as the narrator has the basic function of objective narration. The advantage of this narrative perspective is that it has a broad vision. By describing characters and events in an all-round way in a subject with a wide range of time and space, readers can not only know the specific plot of Zhai Yucheng's young adventure in Hong Kong but also know the inner changes of the characters at that time, thus ensuring the objectivity of the narrative. This phenomenon of perspective transformation runs through almost every story fragment in the novel. When the time goes back to the 1960s and 1970s, the narrator "I" always withdrew from the first perspective, flexibly changed the narrative angle, and broke through the limitations of perspective. To some extent, the invisibility of "my" perspective opens up the story and expands the expressiveness of the work.

The novel has both the realistic and intimate feeling of the first point of view and the objectivity of the purely objective point of view. Due to the free transformation of narrative perspective, the relative flexibility of time and space, and the existence of characters in different networks of relationships, it has a certain impact on the shaping of characters and the setting of the theme meaning of the novel.

3. Narrative strategy

In the chapter design of the novel *Flying Hair*, the author adopts the narrative strategy of textual criticism and story, fiction and non-fiction. In the even-number chapters, the author objectively introduces knowledge about Flying Hair, which is the reference to non-fiction. Odd-numbered chapters are subjective narratives or fictional storylines.

The novel consists of an inscription, a wedge, an epilogue, and seven chapters.

The title is a dialogue, the Wedge and the second and fourth chapters respectively introduce the "Flying Hair" quiz, "Flying Hair" code words, and allusions to the three-color lamp post, and the sixth chapter is Fei Ming's Barber as a chapter. *Flying Hair* Inscription is a dialogue of questions and answers: "Hey ah! What is your current job? Answer: The king's head brushes a single knife, and the four directions of the heroes are bowed down." [2] This is answered by saying that the state of the person being cut symbolizes the haircut. In the Wedges, readers are introduced to the revolution of 1911, which ended the feudal monarchy, and the liberation of the people is no longer bound by tying hair and braids, and haircuts have become necessary and trendy. The Cantonese Flying Hair name is chosen because the pronunciation of fit is similar to flying in Cantonese. In addition to this explanation, in folklore, there are two theories: one is the barber's action when cutting the hair, and the other is because the male hair cutting spade is green and flying white. "Flying Hair" code words are internal barber shop code words, such as "mo" on behalf of women and "sheng" on behalf of men, with "grass" to refer to hair; short hair, thick hair, hair cutting, washing, and perming will have different names and it will be easy to pass the number of words, such as Jiang Hu. Tricolor lamp posts are common red, blue, and white lamp posts outside barbershops. The red and white were derived from the bandage that the barber washed after bleeding, and the blue and white stripes were the barber's logo, which was later combined to represent arteries, veins, and bandages. The author takes Fei Ming's *barber* as the last part of the investigation. The image of this poem jumps, and the barber shop is the emotional place throughout the poem. The poem consists of three sentences; the first half of each sentence is related to haircuts, and the second half jumps to the author's thinking eccentricities. Pancreas foam and fish are forgotten in rivers and lakes (pancreas foam and mutual help), razor and human understanding of the marks under the painting (razor scratch deep marks and human understanding deep), the lower radio and soul spit (the lower wire split and soul mutual help) in this poem, the name of the Zen: there is a calm and calm forget in rivers and lakes.

The first, third, fifth, and seventh chapters of the novel and the epilogue are used to tell the story. The first chapter mainly tells the process of "I" coming to "Le Qun" to get a haircut and getting acquainted with Zhai's father and son, and introduces the contradiction of their ideas on hairdressing. The third chapter takes time back to the 1960s and 1970s and tells the entrepreneurial story and love line of Zhai's father, Zhai Yucheng. The fifth chapter tells that "I" was introduced by Zhai Kangran and met with his master, that is, Master Zhuang, who cut hair in Shanghai. It introduces Zhuang Jinming's current situation as "Windsor" and Zhai Kangran's process of paying his respects. The seventh chapter describes how Zhai Kangran and Zhuang Jinming cut Zhai Yucheng's hair before his death. The epilogue explains the source of Zhai's memorial photos, the ending of "Windsor," and a letter of gold from the deceased.

In the novel, the evidence and the story are interwoven, and it seems that the relationship is not deep, but in fact, it is carefully polished by the author. According to this rhythm, the whole novel keeps readers in and out of non-fictional textual research chapters and fictional story chapters. [4] The author chose Fei Ming's Barber when selecting the reference. This poem is related to haircutting in its imagery, and more importantly, it sets the tone for the philosophical reconciliation of Master Zhai's death. The imconstancy of the world, the warmth and cold of human feelings, the

separation and alienation are no longer important with Master Zhai's death, but the magnanimity and mind are important.

4. Narrative language

First, the novel deviates from the register through the use of anecdotes, textual research, diaries, press releases, and other styles. The internal language style of the novel presents diversity and variability. Secondly, the novel's flexible use of regional dialects such as Cantonese or Shanghai dialect leads to dialect deviation, emphasizes the identity, personality, and story background of the characters, and follows the characteristic expression of Hong Kong language mixed with English to enhance the flexibility and vividness of the novel language. ^[5]

4.1. Regional languages

People of the same country often use different languages because of the different regions in which they live. Because people of different countries and different times live in the same region, their languages gradually show the same style. It can be seen that people often differ in language performance due to different living regions, even people of the same age and country.

In the novella *Flying Hair*, regional dialects have distinct linguistic characteristics. In this novel, regional dialects are mainly represented by the Cantonese and Wu dialects represented by the two masters, Zhai and Zhuang, such as Zhai Yucheng's Cantonese. You do not return to study, do not return to the house enterprise, and do not recognize me according to the old Dou, Zhuang Jinming's Wu language: Ala, Chen Guang, eyes, etc.

The differences in language deepen the confrontation between Hong Kong-style flying hair and Shanghai hairdressing. In the article, when Zhai Kangran first visited Zhuang Jinming as his teacher, when he passed the teachers around him, the teachers spoke Shanghainese that he could not understand. Here, through his inability to understand and communicate in language, he expressed his rejection and unkindness to a Cantonese boy who came to visit a barber shop in Shanghai to learn art, and the regional language differences showed that the barber schools in the two regions had their own characteristics and were incompatible with each other.

4.2. The distinctive language of the times

Language is the product of adapting to the development of society. From the development course of "ancient language to modern language," we can deeply feel that language has very distinct characteristics. In the process of language development, words are the most sensitive factor. For example, from the ancient Chinese "Zhihu" to the current network vocabulary, we can see that new words are constantly emerging, old words are constantly disappearing, or their meanings are changing. In a particular era, under the influence of economy, society, politics, and culture, language changes most obviously under social changes and conceptual development, so language will inevitably derive the specific era terms with the mark of The Times.

Although the time span of *Flying Hair* is several decades, the article does not use a lot of space to describe the environmental or cultural changes of The Times in great detail but expresses the changes of The Times through the use of specific language at present. For example, the book describes that "peacock" in Hong Kong symbolizes the Bai Lemeng of old Shanghai, while the nostalgic person is the "old Kla" of old Shanghai: "Old Kla" refers to a group of people that was prevalent in the last century. At present, their manners and lifestyle still maintain the old fashion of old Shanghai. To some extent, "Old Kla" represents the sophisticated and refined Shanghai of yesteryear. ^[2] From "Lao Kla," such language instantly pulls the reader to the old prosperity of old

Shanghai in the last century. And during the reform and opening up in the last century, Guangdong Province was given priority in policy assistance because of its geographical location near the sea, which attracted most mainlanders to Guangdong for development. These migrant workers in Guangzhou are often called "XX children". In this novel, Master Zhuang first heard Zhai Kangran's apprentice and said, "What kind of world is it now? Guangdong kids are so righteous and want to learn to have a haircut in Shanghai."^[2] Also, Zhai Yucheng was called "Quezai", which was very common in society at that time. The author combined the popular language of the times in his creation and brought the readers into the set timeline.

5. Conclusion

This paper mainly analyzes the narrative art of *Flying Hair* from the perspectives of narrative mode, narrative perspective, narrative strategy, and narrative language. The author uses a double narrative line to explain the story of the conflict between Zhuang Zhai's school and the intergenerational conflict between Zhai's father and son with distinct language characteristics through the transformation of perspective, creating a self-narrative art belonging to *Flying Hair*.

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