

A Brief Analysis of the Female Characters in “Talk Show and Its Friends Season 2”

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Abstract: “Talk Show and Its Friends Season 2” is a professional talk show competition program launched by Tencent Video. With its diverse creative concepts and open and inclusive stage atmosphere, the program has created a group of highly personalized female characters. Taking the female characters in the program as the research object, this paper conducts an analysis from three dimensions: character types, discourse expression, and social significance. It is expected to provide a new perspective for understanding the living conditions and discourse rise of contemporary women, and also offer references for the shaping and development of female characters in talk show programs.

Keywords: “Talk Show and Its Friends Season 2”; Female characters; Talk show programs; Gender issues; Discourse expression; Social significance

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1. Introduction

“Talk Show and Its Friends” is a professional talk show competition program produced by Tencent Video and Seven Ounce Studio. Since its launch, it has taken “establishing new industry standards and building a new happy ‘show’ venue” as its mission. While allowing talk shows to return to happiness itself, the program has also become an important window to show social phenomena and diverse groups. “Talk Show and Its Friends Season 2” inherits the creative concept of the previous season, with 59 groups of actors competing on the same stage. Among them, female actors have created a series of impressive female characters with their unique observation perspectives and vivid expression styles, reflecting the living conditions of contemporary women and conveying women’s voices. Combining the program content and social context, this paper will conduct an in-depth analysis of the female characters in “Talk Show and Its Friends Season 2” from three dimensions: character types, discourse expression, and social significance.

2. Types and core characteristics of female characters

“Talk Show and Its Friends Season 2” gathers female actors of different ages, occupations, and life backgrounds. Taking their personal experiences as the starting point of creation, they have formed a clear-style and distinct-position character spectrum on the stage, collectively constituting a comedic mirror of the living conditions of contemporary women^[1].

2.1. Deconstructors of realistic issues

Women face many common dilemmas in life, such as “body anxiety”, “workplace prejudice”, and “gender discipline.” These topics lack space for public discussion. In talk show programs, female actors, with their sharp social insight, transform the long-concealed gender dilemmas into comedic texts that can be discussed and empathized with^[2]. They do not avoid sensitive issues or exaggerate gender conflicts, but complete the dismantling of unreasonable orders through laughter.

Yan Yi and Yan Yue are typical representatives of such characters. From micro perspectives such as name culture, public expression, and workplace situation, they reveal the subtle gender discipline. They bluntly say, “Guangzhi, Zhisheng, Da Zhangwei—these names sound like men who are dynamic and highly expected. They don’t sound like your girlfriends; they are all men who want to conquer the world”, using humorous comparisons to pierce the common gender stereotypes. Based on their own experiences, they also sharply joke, “Today we are discussing the workplace, but among the twelve actors in this group, only the two of us are women. It feels like an industry conference inviting a group of male actors to complain about how hard they struggle in the workplace, and we are also invited because they need two etiquette ladies”, cleverly reflecting the marginalized situation and implicit discrimination of women in the workplace.

2.2. Practitioners of self-worth

Society often attaches fixed labels to women, such as “gentle”, “obedient”, and “family-oriented.” Many women are constrained by these labels in the process of growth and gradually ignore the pursuit of their ideal lives^[3]. The female actors on the stage of “Talk Show and Its Friends Season 2” refuse to be defined by labels and redefine women’s self-worth and life choices with sober and independent expressions.

Bu Jingyun shared her understanding of women’s sense of relaxation in the program. She said bluntly, “Relaxation is the best gift from time to women, while delicacy is the shackle of youth. You see, young girls are often criticized for wearing yoga pants all day, but older women are not”, exposing society’s double standards for women of different age groups by comparing the different evaluations received by young and older women in daily dressing.

Da Guoshou, who holds a doctoral degree in philosophy, has a rigorous and structured speaking style, but can inadvertently hit the audience’s funny bone. She said in the program, “At first, I thought you came alone, but now I think you came as three people—you have the ego, id, and superego in you.” She uses a philosophical perspective to analyze daily puzzles, does not cater to others or stir up emotions, and proves the diverse possibilities of female charm with her thoughts and personality, making rational thinking an important dimension of female expression.

2.3. Explorers of diverse styles

This season’s female performances cover deeper and broader themes with more diverse styles. Some female

actors have boldly innovated in performance forms and styles, breaking out of the framework of traditional talk shows. With characteristics such as relaxation, absurdity, and daily life, they have enriched the stage form and expanded the artistic boundaries of talk shows ^[4].

Xiao Pa takes her broken original family as creative material, telling complex growth experiences in a relaxed and calm tone. Her performance resolves the pain of growth with a gentle rhythm, making the audience feel strength in laughter. Xiao Die tells her growth experience as the third daughter in a family with three children, talking about her childhood daily life of wearing old clothes and using old textbooks, and sharing her growth story of only being valued by her family through excellent academic performance. She shows the path of self-awakening of ordinary women through real-life fragments. Huangdao Renqi Wang tries to integrate science fiction and absurd elements into her creation, using the fantasy setting of “being trapped on a desert island” to analyze realistic issues such as spiritual oppression in the workplace, endless overtime work, and unreasonable work requirements, making realistic criticism more layered and comically impactful. Female performers on the stage encourage and recognize each other, completing the warm support between women with kindness and support, making diverse expressions more heartfelt ^[5].

3. Discourse expression of female characters and presentation of social issues

The reason why the female characters in “Talk Show and Its Friends Season 2” can arouse widespread resonance is that they transform personalized physical experiences, emotional feelings, and living dilemmas into common cultural issues. They dissolve heaviness with humor and confront absurdity with daily life, allowing female issues to be seen and discussed in a relaxed variety show context ^[6].

3.1. Core characteristics of discourse expression

The discourse expression of female characters has distinct “daily life” characteristics. They do not rely on grand narratives, but start from trivial matters around them and personal experiences, making the audience feel a sense of substitution. Based on her own experience, Shan He talks about “receiving takeout when busy to the point of gritting her teeth, but at the same time being troubled by the comment that ‘fat girls can’t get married’”, combining the hardships of workplace struggle with the helplessness of body anxiety, which is so real that it is both distressing and funny.

Humor is also an important way of discourse expression for female characters. They are good at using comedic techniques such as self-deprecation, irony, and exaggeration to dissolve the heaviness of serious issues, allowing the audience to accept viewpoints through laughter ^[7]. Bu Jingyun starts with a fictional emotional affair in a dream and expresses herself in a self-deprecating way. Extending along the topic, she discusses serious social issues such as spreading pornographic rumors and female shame, providing a gentle channel for discussing heavy topics. Cai Cai complains about the unreasonable design of the underwear in her performance. She describes the sense of relaxation when taking off her underwear as the feeling of “being released from prison”, pointing out the reality that women’s bodies are kidnapped by commercial logic and gender discipline in a hilarious performance.

These female actors do not deliberately create gender opposition. Their expressions point to structural social injustice and unreasonable discipline, conveying the concepts of respect, equality, and diversity ^[8]. Whether criticizing workplace discrimination or defending the right to bodily autonomy, they all show a gentle yet firm female expression posture.

3.2. Core social issues focused on

The female characters in “Talk Show and Its Friends Season 2” always focus their expressions on the real social issues faced by contemporary women. Starting from their own life experiences, they transform trivial daily troubles into public topics with universal resonance, making the real situation of women’s groups visible.

Combined with their own experiences, female actors in the program talk about various dilemmas encountered by women in social life. Yan Yi and Yan Yue talk about the behavioral norms that women are disciplined with since childhood, and also point out that this discipline puts women at a disadvantage in workplace competition and public expression, exposing the hidden gender discrimination in the workplace environment. Zhang Hui complains about the trouble of second-hand smoke in public places, and resists the disrespectful public environment with the self-deprecation of a “smoke alarm.” Actors such as Shan He and Xiao Die collectively resist body shaming, criticizing prejudices such as unreasonable plus-size women’s clothing design and “fat girls can’t get married”; Cai Cai focuses on the consumption trap of underwear, exposing the commercial logic of “making small breasts look bigger and big breasts look smaller” that deliberately shapes women’s bodies.

These issues derived from real life are not scattered emotions of individuals, but condensed into the common living experience of contemporary women, making the female expression in the program have social value that directly hits reality.

4. Social significance and value of female characters

The female characters in “Talk Show and Its Friends Season 2” are not only comedic performers in variety shows, but also important carriers of contemporary female culture. Their value goes far beyond the entertainment level and has profound significance and value at the social level. Their performances are full of humor and profound meaning, making people start to think about the invisible tension between gender, systems, and daily life, and becoming an important force to promote the rise of female discourse and social progress^[9].

4.1. Providing emotional release and spiritual comfort for women

Contemporary women are facing multiple pressures, such as workplace, family, and gender, and the female characters in the program have become their “spiritual ibuprofen.” Shan He’s resistance to body anxiety makes women troubled by body issues feel understood and supported; Yan Yi and Yan Yue’s criticism of gender inequality resonates with women who have encountered similar injustices; Bu Jingyun’s advocacy of “sense of relaxation” provides a way to relieve stress for women trapped by perfectionism. Their performances allow female audiences to release negative emotions through laughter, feel that they are not alone, and gain spiritual comfort and strength.

4.2. Promoting the public expression and dissemination of female discourse

In the traditional social structure, women’s right to speak is suppressed, and it is difficult for women’s dilemmas and demands to be heard. The program provides a platform for public expression for women, allowing them to jump out of the victim narrative and speak out with a sincere, mocking, and sharp attitude^[10]. The performances of female actors are widely disseminated through online platforms, and related topics have

sparked heated discussions among netizens. Topics such as “invisible discrimination against women in the workplace” and “sources of body anxiety” have extended from the program to the social public opinion field, making more people pay attention to the real dilemmas faced by women.

4.3. Injecting new vitality into the talk show industry

Since the development of the talk show industry, it has been facing the dilemmas of homogeneous themes and single styles, while the female characters in the program have brought new breakthroughs to the industry. They have incorporated gender issues, female dilemmas, and other content into their creations, making the program content more in-depth.

In terms of performance style, their relaxed, delicate, and emotional expressions have made talk show performances no longer limited to the single comedic paradigm of “sharp and strong logic”, adding a new style dimension to talk shows. The program has also discovered a group of outstanding female talk show actors, including local label managers and amateurs from non-professional backgrounds, exploring and cultivating more female talent for the industry.

4.4. Promoting social cognition and understanding of women

The female characters in the program appear as real and diverse images. They are no longer a single image, such as “gentle and obedient” or “good wife and mother”, but show more independent, brave, humorous, and thoughtful female images. Da Guoshou, Bu Jingyun, Shan He, Wang Xiaoli, etc., let the audience see the richness and complexity of women. The public also has a deeper understanding of the pressures faced by women in real life. This has effectively promoted social tolerance and understanding of women.

5. Conclusion

The female characters in “Talk Show and Its Friends Season 2” are rich and diverse. By expressing their own stories and emotions, they have endowed talk shows with more warmth and depth. These characters have made talk shows not only “the art of making people laugh”, but also an important carrier for reflecting social reality and promoting gender equality. In the future, it is hoped that the “Talk Show and Its Friends” series of programs can further expand the coverage of female characters, encourage more real, in-depth, and diverse expressions, balance the stance of gender narratives, and allow female characters to not only “speak out” but also “speak out in depth.”

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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