

College of Foreign Languages and Literatures, FJCU

Transition and Transformation: Explorations in Language, Literature, Culture, and Translation

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轉銜·轉變：外語、文學、文化與翻譯之探究

Paper Abstract (English)

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Title : From Text to Screen: A Comparative Analysis of Lin Haiyin's Chengnan jiushi and its Cinematic Adaptation by Wu Yigong			
Fields of specialization : film adaptation, comparative literature			
摘要：英文 250 或中文 500 字以內 Abstract : fewer than 250 words in English or 500 words in Chinese			
<p>This study is a comparative analysis of Lin Haiyin's seminal work, Chengnan jiushi, and its cinematic adaptation by mainland Chinese director Wu Yigong. The novel, published in 1960, follows the six-year-old protagonist Ying-tzu as she grows up and assimilates into Peking in the 1920s. Being originally from Taiwan, her sense of self and the portrayal of her family as outsiders to Peking are thus essential to the original narrative.</p> <p>This study aims to examine the director's adaptation strategies, particularly how the three elements of setting, characters, and plot are navigated and reimagined in the cinematic format. The analysis includes the choices made in the adaptation process, such as the exclusion of the third story, "Lan-I Niang." The purpose is to understand the considerations guiding narrative structuring in film adaptations. The study found that the meticulous craftsmanship of the set designers allows audiences to immerse themselves in the world of old Peking, effectively capturing the novel's historical richness and emotional depth. This careful blending of artifice and authenticity enhances the settings' integral role in the narrative, contributing significantly to the film's success.</p> <p>In character portrayal, the adaptation uses domestication to simplify the complexities of the original text by removing accents and distinct linguistic traits. This leads to a homogenization of cultural identity, as critics noted the absence of Taiwanese elements, reflecting a trend in adaptations prioritizing accessibility over nuanced representation. Yet such choices often come at the expense of the cultural richness that defines the source material. Regarding the plot, the entire "Lan I-niang" story from the novel is left out, very likely because of the negative images contained within. The film adaptation may have been seen as a way to emphasize cultural continuity and nostalgia for a shared past between mainland China and Taiwan, especially during a period when the two sides of the strait remained politically divided but culturally linked. Thus, while the film itself remained apolitical, its production and promotion likely have an underlying motive to promote unity and soften tensions by focusing on a common cultural history.</p>			
Keywords: Lin Haiyin, Chengnan jiushi, adaptation, comparative analysis			