

The Cross-cultural Communication of Chinese Culture by Film and Television from the Perspective of Cultural Confidence

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Abstract –*Film and television, as the benchmark of Chinese culture's cross-cultural communication, is closely connected with cultural confidence. Only by insisting on cultural consciousness and cultural confidence, will China's film and television be invincible in the international film and television circle. The culture in film and television is divided into traditional cultural symbols and traditional cultural connotations. The transcultural communication of film and television has three strategies or channels: "going abroad by borrowing ships from others," "going abroad by creating ships by themselves" and "attracting others to sail to China". A good translator is an external accelerator for cross-cultural film and television. When the film and television culture is disseminated to the outside world, good translations should be used to help the external transmission of film and television culture and help foreigners to understand Chinese culture.*

Keywords: communication strategies, Chinese culture cultural self-confidence,; transcultural communication, translation quality.

INTRODUCTION

The year 2017 witnessed the boosting of Chinese film and television, which is not only because of the high record of domestic box office, but also because of its growing international influence. From film *Wolf Warrior II*, film *Youth* and other national movies that have won national praise in China, to film *Big Fish and Begonia* which won the international award--Best Animated Feature Film Award in the 15th Budapest International Animation Film Festival. When *Born in China* was released in North America for a week, and the box office get as high as 12 million US dollar, far exceeding the domestic box office. At the same time, the TV series does not lags behind, *Tribes and Empires: Storm of Prophecy* is hit overseas, and the US's first online video site Netflix purchased the

distribution right of the Internet drama *Day and Night*, which is then broadcast in more than 190 countries and regions, making *Day and Night* become China's first overseas network drama broadcast on a large scale. These films have conveyed the Chinese cultural characteristics and the Chinese cultural confidence.

Overview of Cultural Self-Confidence and Chinese Culture Film and Television

1.1 Definition of Cultural Self-confidence

Cultural self-confidence is inseparable from cultural self-awareness. Mr. Fei Xiaotong explained in his work *On Culture and Cultural Awareness* that Cultural self-awareness means the courage to make an appearance in the world." And there should be cultural consciousness and cultural self-confidence in Chinese Film and television [1]. There are two layers of cultural self-confidence, the first layer is full recognition of one's own culture, and the other is full understanding of the international influence of one's own culture. With the continuous advancement of globalization, Chinese culture has appeared more and more frequent in foreign exchanges. More and more Chinese film and television which embodied in Chinese culture have entered the international market and entered the international stage. The influence of Chinese film and television culture has also grown in depth.

1.2 Chinese Culture in Film and Television

With the progress of the "one Belt and one Road", more and more Chinese people have stepped out of the country and entered the world, and Chinese culture has also become global. Chinese film and television works become carriers of Chinese culture self-confidence displaying at the international film and television stage, reflecting ancient civilizations. The cultural identities of ancient and modern powers have played a pioneering and exemplary role in spreading

Chinese culture by film and television to the outside world. Zheng Dongtian divided the Chinese culture in film and television into two categories: traditional cultural symbols and traditional cultural connotations. The former belongs to shallow culture, the latter belongs to deep culture, and traditional cultural connotation is mostly reflected by traditional cultural symbols [2].

1.2.1 Cultural symbols in Chinese film and television

Chinese culture has a long history. Before the Birth of film and television media, the main way to spread Chinese culture overseas was through text. With the birth of film and television media, compared with text, film and television is displayed to the audience with a dynamic audio-visual image, becoming the most convenient and vivid carrier of cultural symbols, because the Chinese culture in film and television has the most intuitive features and easiest to enter the audience's vision. If Audiences need to "perceive a heterogeneous culture, first of all they are exposed to some symbols, including unique colours, unique patterns, sound and shapes, etc. and the image of totems and people"[2]. Taking the movie *Red Sorghum* adapted from Mo Yan, the Chinese Noble Prizer's novel as an example, the director Zhang Yimou showed the theme of the film with red as the main tone in Chinese folk culture. The image of red sorghum in the wind was selected through various shooting techniques, which make the red sorghum present a variety of states, implying different psychological reactions. The sorghum rendered in red at the end of the movie was stained with blood, highlighting the human fear of death and the desire for life. In addition, the heroine, my grandma's red dress, red sedan chair, and the ceremony of breaking the sedan embody the elements of Chinese cultural symbols. The controversial film *Red Cliff* is about war as its theme, interspersed with many Chinese cultural symbols, such as dumplings, tea ceremony, Kong Ming lanterns and other Chinese cultural iconic symbols, but these Chinese cultural symbols are gradually melting away when the films ends with western "knight spirit" which makes Chinese Cultural symbols seems to be a bit entangled and contorted in that film [3]. This indicated that the Chinese symbolization should be well consistent with the deep cultural connotation behind the symbol, so that the cultural spirit transmitted by the cultural symbol in film and television can be more real.

1.2.2 Cultural connotation in Chinese film and television

Excellent film products often do not simply represent Chinese culture with cultural symbols but link the cultural spirit in cultural connotation. "It's not the cultural mark, or the cultural symbols but the true cultural spirit" in film and television that makes the film or TV series excellent [4]. Moral Ethics and values are the most concentrated expression of traditional cultural connotations in Chinese films. The kindness, loyalty, respect for the old, and love the young, and other values advocated by Confucius and Mencius in Chinese traditional culture, reflect the values of Chinese culture and the Chinese people and vitalize Chinese traditional culture"[5].

As early as the 16th century, Matteo Ricci and other missionaries introduced Chinese Confucian culture to Europe. It was a sensation and caused a "China hit or Chinoiserie. In the 18th century, French writer Voltaire was deeply influenced by Confucianism. The Orphan of the Zhao Family was adapted into "Chinese Orphan" by Voltaire, and staged in France, which has earned a good reputation both at home and abroad. Voltaire abandoned the theme of revenge in the original work and let the tyrant feel remorse in the face of moral sentiments" [6]. In the new century, director Chen Kaige made the "The Orphan of the Zhao Family" to the screen which earned great response both home and abroad. The traditional cultural connotations of "righteousness", "doughtiness" and "benevolence" embodied in the film makes the spirit of Chinese culture shining. The goodness and righteous spirit of Chengying and other heroes in the movie are the embodiment of these three spirits: "righteousness", "doughtiness" and "benevolence". According to Kirk Honeycutt, a senior commentator and full-time Hollywood film critic of the Los Angeles Daily, the core of the story is to rescue the last remaining orphan Zhao from the humanitarian spirit. They made huge sacrifices to rescue this meager soul (the orphan). It is this sacrifice that resonates with domestic and foreign audiences. It has not only madly accepted by Chinese audiences, but also greatly praised by Western audiences and fans^[7], and this "mealy soul" represents the thinking system "righteousness", "doughtiness" and "benevolence" that has been existed in China for five thousand years [8]. In the context of the new era, cultural elements in film and television operas can make the national cultural works stage into the world.

STRATEGIES FOR THE EXTERNAL DISSEMINATION Chinese Culture in Film and Television

In the process of Chinese culture enter the world, "movies are bound to serve as pioneers or benchmarks for the construction of a cultural power" [9]. As a cultural product, how does film and television opera occupy a place in the international film scene, making Chinese culture confident and bright in the world. Li Jiashan, Executive Deputy Dean of the National Institute of International Strategy for Cultural Development, proposed that the spread of Chinese culture to the outside world went through the process of "borrowing ships to go abroad" and "building ships to go abroad", and then the overseas ship "sailing to China" [10]. The external dissemination of film and television culture can also learn from these three strategies, making it an effective strategy for film and television to disseminate Chinese culture, and play its role as a benchmark for cultural power.

2.1 Borrowing Ships to Go Abroad (Borrowing the good form of foreign films and Tv operas; or Cooperating with foreign film-making company)

Under the overall view of Chinese cultural self-confidence, the cultural dissemination through film and television may draw on the concept of "in-between" by Orientalist expert Homi Bhabha [11] to realize "the form of entertainment + Cultural Value and Connotation" [14], which means the local national cultures are packaged with Western art forms, so that the dialogues are conducted at the same time. Such works have both good form and unique eastern qualities which gain Westerner's curiosity. At the same time, it is also feasible to cooperate with foreign film and television companies, taking *Born in China*, as an example which surged overseas box office in 2018 compared with domestic box office. Produced by Radio and Television Group Co., Ltd. and other related organizations, *Born in China* is a sign of enhanced cooperation between China and the United States in film area, and it is a model for in-depth cultural exchanges between the two countries. As Sam C. Mac said: A few Chinese animal cultural symbols (panda, Tibetan antelope, snow leopard) keep telling the audience about the reality of Chinese culture as the name of the movie, even though it doesn't have direct Chinese Gongfu, or orally presented Buddhist ideology, etc [12]. Here the evaluation of rotten tomato, the authoritative website of international film critics, is posted that undoubtedly Chinese culture and the traditional spirit of China have been successfully

implanted in the natural documentary film *Born in China*.

2.2 Building Ships to Go Abroad (making good films and TV operas by our own strength, and make it become globally)

Cultural self-confidence is closely related to the country's overall strength. With the enhancement of the overall national strength, the prosperity of the Nation, the level of Chinese film production technology has been greatly improved, and the entertainment and artistry of the film have also been developed and updated, thus making the film become the most common cultural carrier to disseminate Chinese culture. The film *Operation Red Sea* draws on the production method of Hollywood blockbusters and the war scenes in the film are demonstrated realistically. There are even such reviews on the mainstream film critics: Timeline, and Rotten potato at home and abroad as follow: First-class production of *Operation Red Sea*; international standards; a model of Hollywood blockbuster style. At the same time, in addition to commerciality and artistry, it reflects the recognition of excellent Chinese culture, showing patriotism, collectivism, socialist values, and the cultural confidence of the Chinese. The final climax of the film vowed to stop the loss of nuclear radioactive material from the hands of terrorists, the director "artistically presented the realistic mission that the great powers or nations should build a community of shared future for mankind" which is advocated by Chinese president Xi Jinping [13].

In order to realize the goal of building ship(making good films and TV operas) and make it become globally, to show the confidence of Chinese culture, to show the charm of Chinese culture, and to achieve cross-cultural communication, in addition to digging and creating local themes and national themes, Chinese film and television company must also practice basic production skills. Therefore, the country should increase film education. Efforts will be made to improve the quality of film production itself, in order to better enter the international film market, and to make a confident voice of Chinese film in the international film industry, so as to truly become the benchmark and pioneer to disseminate Chinese culture globally.

2.3 Sailing to China

Toynbee, the famous British historian, believes that Chinese civilization will provide endless cultural treasures and ideological resources for the transformation of the future world and human society

in the 21st century [14]. The continuous increase of the international influence of China's film and television industry has opened up new channels for Chinese Cultural communication or dissemination, and it has also attracted the attention of overseas film and television investment companies. From film *Mulan* produced by American Disney Company to film *Kung Fu Panda* in DreamWorks Animation, it can be seen that Hollywood is deepening its Cognition on Chinese culture. Although *Mulan* does not expressly convey the traditional Chinese heroine image for the father and does not express the Chinese culture, we have to admit that China's excellent history and culture really attract foreigners to sail to China, trying to understand Chinese culture from film and television, and spread Chinese culture.

Overcoming Language Translation Difficulty

Chinese culture embodied in film and television is passed to the audience through pictures and sounds. If there are only authentic pictures and lack of language interpretation or explanation, it will also cause viewers understanding obstacles, which will affect the Chinese cultural dissemination through film and television, and the corresponding cultural connotation embodied in the film and television will also encounter corresponding difficulties. Therefore, the quality of translation directly affects the dissemination of film and television operas and the acceptance of the audience. Good English translations or foreign subtitles or dubbing are catalysts for the external transmission of film and television [15]. High-quality film and television operas coupled with high-quality language translation or subtitles will make the target audience suddenly understand the culture. This requires translators to tell Chinese stories well and express Chinese culture clearly in an international way of expression, so that foreign audience can understand and be convinced. As an external factor of disseminating film and television culture, translation should also fully play its function and try to eliminate the cultural gap.

Taking the translation of the title of the documentary film *Wild China* as an example, in the negotiation process between China and BBC, United Kingdom, although BBC has a complete production process for "wild" series in intercontinental animal films, China has clearly requested to add more humanistic elements taking into account the differences between Chinese and Western cultures. Therefore there have been corresponding changes in

translation. The original literal translation of "Wild China" is translated into "Beautiful China (美丽中国)". Compared with the former, the latter is superior because "Wildness" means uncivilized. If the BBC know more about the humanistic spirit: the unity of man and nature" in China, it is better to translate the documentary film into "Ecological China" or Beautiful China, because it better conveys the Chinese people's ecological and environmental protection concepts. The translation of "Wild China" is an example of the collision and fusion of Chinese and Western cultures, as well as the self-confidence of Chinese culture in the process of spreading film and television culture works to the outside world.

CONCLUSION

With the gradual rise of China's new film and television power, the cultural dissemination of film and television culture must be culturally confident. Although China's film and television product company can learn from Hollywood, they cannot follow Hollywood. At the same time, the dissemination of Chinese culture through film and television should shift from the distorted negative image to self-image in Western films, it should break the barriers between different cultures, eliminate misunderstandings and prejudices, and restore the true Chinese culture and Chinese image in the film and television. By improving Chinese overall strength, developing new strategies in addition to the three above mentioned strategies, and strictly controlling the concept of language translation, Chinese film and television will achieve rapid development in the context of globalization and tell positive Chinese story. Over time, China will realize the transformation from telling Chinese stories in mainstream languages in the world to telling Chinese stories in Chinese in the world.

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