

Analysis on the Performance of Chinese and Western Cultural Differences in Film

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Abstract: *With the deepening of cultural globalization, the cultural differences between China and the West have gradually become prominent in various fields. As an important form of cultural communication, film has gradually become a stage to show the cultural differences between China and the West. The representation of Chinese and Western cultures in movies can often vividly reflect the differences between the two cultures, which is very important for mutual understanding, communication and learning. This article explores the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, combines the forms of expression in films, explores the specific manifestations of Chinese and Western cultural differences in films, and analyzes their causes and effects.*

Keywords: *Cultural differences between China and the West; Movie; Media; Advertising design; Innovation; Theatrical films; Television arts; Culture*

1. Introduction

With the continuous acceleration of globalization, cultural exchanges and integration between China and the West have become a very important topic. As a prominent form of cultural expression, film also plays a very important role in the cultural differences between China and the West^[1]. Through film, we can deeply perceive and experience the similarities and differences between Chinese and Western cultures, which also enriches our cognition and understanding of diverse cultures. This paper aims to explore the performance of Chinese and Western cultural differences in film, so as to gain an in-depth understanding of cultural differences and their related expressions in the context of cross-cultural communication. We will take drama, film and television art as the main research object, focus on the differences between Chinese and Western cultures in terms of film themes, expression techniques, character images, etc., and introduce excellent cases in Chinese and Western films through examples, so that readers can more intuitively perceive the huge differences and mutual influences between Chinese and Western cultures.

The view of this article is not that there is no cultural superiority or inferiority, but hopes to explore the process of cultural exchange Chinese conflict and cultural transformation between China and the West with the help of classic or popular film works. The plugging of cultural differences between China and the West runs through the entire article, but it is hoped that through the analysis and analysis of their expression, we can better understand and appreciate the differences between different cultures and respect each other's unique characteristics. The author has explored the field of cultural exchange for many years and has accumulated certain experience and insights. This article will examine the cultural differences between China and the West from a new perspective, and strive for excellence in the structure of the article, hoping that readers can appreciate and be inspired.

2. The expression of the differences between Chinese and Western visual cultures

In terms of visual culture, there are big differences between China and the West. China and the West use different visual languages and symbology to express cultural connotations, so in film, Chinese and Western expressions will also be different^[2]. For example, in the use of color, Chinese prefer red, while Westerners prefer blue; In terms of picture composition, Western films pay attention to the symmetry of the picture and the strong and powerful lines of the picture, while Chinese films pay attention to the creation of artistic conception and atmosphere, and like to use intentional composition methods to express emotions.

First of all, the use of color in the picture is one of the significant differences between the visual expression of Chinese and Western cultures. In Western films, especially European and American films, they prefer to use pure, cold colors, and often pay attention to technical details such as lighting and

color saturation, creating a strong color atmosphere, which is more in line with the value orientation of individualism and rationalism; Chinese films, on the other hand, emphasize the use of warm, soft colors and natural light sources, such as the striking gray-green hue in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and the changing natural scenery of loess, wet woods, and golden rape flowers in the shots of *Alive*, all of which show Chinese artistic conception and humanistic feelings of natural response to the environment. For example, in Chinese films, soft tones and light styles are often used to express emotions, atmosphere and themes to create a precipitated and dignified atmosphere. For example, in the movie *Full of Golden Armor in the City* directed by Zhang Yimou, through the elegant and noble use of colors, coupled with the magnificent scene design, the whole film is made into a beautiful and elegant picture of the ancient court. In contrast, Western films usually pay more attention to contrasting color combinations, which can better emphasize the characteristics of dramatic conflicts and characters. For example, in Spielberg's film *Schindler's List*, he used high-contrast colors such as red and black and white to bring the massacre of Jews under the Nazi German regime directly to the audience's eyes in a vivid way, which is impossible to ignore.

Secondly, Chinese and Western films are also different in terms of picture composition. Chinese films prefer horizontal and vertical, cohesive and harmonious picture composition, emphasizing the integrity and stability of the picture. In director Zhang Yimou's other work, *Heroes*, the camera mostly adopts the technique of head-up or overhead shooting, and expresses the relationship between the characters through symmetrical composition, highlighting the core values of honor and loyalty in ancient Chinese martial arts culture. Western films, on the other hand, pay more attention to expressing decisiveness, jumping, and pursuing unbalanced picture composition techniques, highlighting individuals and their inner emotional impulses. For example, in Christopher Nolan's film *Inception*, he uses a large number of special effects scenes and camera follow-up techniques to thrillingly present the protagonists' journey into exploring dreams, deeply revealing the deep fears and longings of human beings.

Finally, the differences between Chinese and Western visual cultures are explored in many other aspects of film performance. For example, there are significant differences in shooting and lens composition, costume and styling design.

Because of this, film, as a global language, has begun to become the best carrier for cross-cultural communication and cooperation, so that people from different backgrounds and different cultures can deeply understand each other's different aesthetic standards through film. The film is like an attraction poster, presenting the story, cultural background and social topics to the audience realistically.

3. Role image in the context of Chinese and Western cultures

The difference between Chinese and Western cultural backgrounds has also led to differences in film character images. Chinese films often show some restrained, subtle, and mysterious images, and they are not very good at expressing personal emotions, while Western films focus on the characteristics of individuals, usually more direct and bold^[2-3]. At the same time, Chinese and Western social values and moral concepts are also important factors affecting character setting, for example, in Chinese films, traditional moral principles pay more attention to emotional relationships such as family affection and friendship, while Western films pay more attention to shaping heroic images.

First of all, in terms of expressing character images, Chinese and Western films have different cultural backgrounds and aesthetic concepts that affect character shaping. Western films often emphasize the independence of the characters' personalities, clear personal ideologies and challenges to heterogeneous cultures; In Chinese films, on the contrary, it is often necessary to emphasize the values of "collective spirit" and the dominant group in which the individual "I am us" people are in a group greater than one through the reproduction of character relationships, social environment settings, customs and traditions, which is especially prominent in *Farewell My Concubine*.

Secondly, in terms of expressing character images, Chinese and Western films also have cultural backgrounds and aesthetic concepts. In Western films, the characters often have the characteristics of confrontation and breaking through various restrictions such as society, culture, and ideology, presenting a social form with a flamboyant personality and free-spiritedness. However, in Chinese films, the spirit of collectivism is more emphasized, and the characters are often inseparable and interdependent. For example, in the Chinese film *Alive*, although the protagonist Fugui has experienced countless hardships, his tenacious vitality has always come from gratitude and concern for family, family affection and friendship, thus showing the value of traditional Chinese family ethics and

collectivist spirit.

Finally, Chinese and Western films have different values and aesthetic standards in character shaping. In Western films, more emphasis is often placed on individual independence and human rights awareness, presenting a social atmosphere that pays attention to the exploration and development of individuals' hearts. In Chinese films, on the other hand, they usually focus on showing the relationship between the individual and the collective, presenting a social atmosphere that values traditional culture and national spirit. For example, in the Chinese film *Youth*, through the life experiences of the protagonists and other characters, the spirit of heroic struggle and national rejuvenation under the leadership of the Communist Party of China is promoted; In the American film *The Shawshank Redemption*, the importance of personal faith and free will is rendered through the struggle of the male protagonist Andy.

In short, the role images in the context of Chinese and Western cultures have both similarities and obvious differences. By comparing and analyzing the film works in the background of the two cultures and the characters they portray, we can not only have a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the values of the two cultures, but also enhance people's understanding and respect for multiculturalism.

4. Storytelling in Chinese and Western cultures

There are also different ways of storytelling in both Chinese and Western cultures. In Chinese films, metaphors, symbols and other artistic techniques are often used to express emotions and artistic conception, and pay attention to conveying the meaning of life; In Western films, more attention is paid to gripping rhythm changes and plot design^[4-5]. In terms of narrative techniques, Western films usually adopt a linear narrative method, focusing on the coherence and integrity of the narrative. Chinese films, on the other hand, pay more attention to the obscurity and subtlety of the narrative, and often select fragments similar to memoirs for narration, so as to emphasize the pursuit of the unity of heaven and man. The detailed analysis is as follows:

First of all, Chinese and Western films are deeply influenced by their respective traditional cultures, and have completely different tendencies for the impact of the fate of the characters and the consideration of the spiritual level. In Chinese films, they often pay attention to structural changes and overall presentation, and like to summarize the whole text at the end of the story or at a certain point, emphasizing the closure of the overall logic. For example, in *Everlasting and Unchanging* directed by Wang Xiaoshuai, the film mainly narrates a woman's experience from adolescent love relationship to marriage life, and this ordinary plot reflects the huge changes in the class span of survivors from the early days of reform and opening up to 2008. In Western films, more attention is paid to the individual's emotional experience and inner presentation, thereby emphasizing emotional resonance and understanding. For example, in the American movie *Forrest Gump*, with the role of Forrest Gump as the center, it portrays a growth process from ordinary to extraordinary, showing subtleties in the expression of emotions.

Secondly, Chinese and Western film narratives also reflect different aesthetic and cultural cognitions. In Chinese filmmaking, in general, more attention is paid to linear narrative or feature film-style narrative, focusing on artistic techniques and the interpretation of ideology, that is, macro meaning, such as award-winning films such as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, which are deeply loved by audiences at home and abroad. In Western films, more emphasis is placed on logic and visuality, and often combined with various audiovisual special effects techniques, such as the Hollywood blockbuster *Titanic* has attracted widespread attention. Among them, the extraordinary audiovisual experience that amazes the audience has become the most attractive part of this type of film, and its classic line "Never Let Go" has also become a slogan widely imitated after such films became popular.

Third, the differences in Chinese and Western film narrative methods have strong regional cultural colors, and the film stories in different regions or cultural backgrounds are obviously different. For example, Hong Kong films like to adopt extreme interpretation and exaggerated performance techniques, and discuss topics such as the identity and moral choice of special groups such as Chinese and Western mixed races, forming a unique atmosphere; German films, on the other hand, often combine documentary and pressurized plots, showing war, separation, and the long scroll into the future in a panoramic way.

In short, the film storytelling methods in the context of Chinese and Western cultures have their own characteristics, and through the comparative analysis of the two cultural backgrounds and the film works they present, we can more comprehensively and objectively understand the inner aesthetics of different cultures and the emotional expression of characters.

5. Future prospects

With the deepening of the exchange and integration of Chinese and Western cultures, the ways in which the differences between Chinese and Western cultures are expressed in movies will be more diverse and rich in the future. Here are a few aspects of the outlook for the future:

(1) Integration of China and the West

Due to the acceleration of globalization and the overseas promotion of China's excellent film works, cultural differences have gradually disappeared, and the expression of Chinese and Western films will also merge^[6]. For example, in recent years, Chinese science fiction films such as *The Wandering Earth* have adopted Western special effects technology and absorbed many elements and methods of Hollywood movies, becoming a representative work of the integration of Chinese and Western cultures.

(2) Innovative exploration

As filmmaking technology and visual effects continue to improve, directors and producers will have more room to innovate and explore to present cultural differences. For example, in the movie *Kung Fu Yoga*, on the basis of inheriting Chinese kung fu, the director also formed a unique aesthetic and style through transnational joint shooting, interspersed with elements such as American action movies and disco music, so that fans are full of expectations for subsequent exploration.

(3) Education enlightenment

As an important way of cultural dissemination, film also helps to eliminate the gap and misunderstanding brought to us by the cultural differences between China and the West. By showing how the cultures of the two countries are represented in film, we can better understand and appreciate the art and culture of the other country. Consequently, more educational resources will be needed in the future, calling on people to experience different cultures, and encouraging the younger generation to promote cultural exchanges between China and the West through creation.

In addition, in the future, the cultural differences between China and the West will be better expressed in the story and character shaping of the film. It can be expected that more Chinese and Western co-productions will emerge in the future, which will not only be works with cross-cultural characteristics, but also show the rich resources and imagination brought by different cultures of China and the West. At the same time, with the fierce competition in the global film market, Chinese and Western film production will also show a more diversified trend in the future. The internationalization of the film industry is becoming more and more obvious, Chinese investors and producers can obtain more international opportunities through mergers and acquisitions, investment, etc., while Western film companies are also paying more attention to the Chinese market while seeking cooperation and external resources. This trend will give birth to more high-quality Chinese and Western co-productions that meet the needs of globalization, providing a more wonderful visual feast for global audiences. With the deepening of the understanding and exchange of their respective cultural backgrounds, Chinese and Western films will be better integrated and stimulated with each other, presenting a more vivid, interesting and positive side in the world.

6. Conclusion

In short, the cultural differences between China and the West are expressed in many ways in the film, including visual language, character image and storytelling. These differences are determined by many factors such as the social environment, history, culture and values of China and the West. Understanding the differences between Chinese and Western cultures can guide us to better understand and appreciate each other's cultural works, and achieve the goal of mutual learning and common progress in cultural exchanges. In the future, the performance of Chinese and Western cultural differences in movies will not only be explored in technology and innovation, but also involve values and aesthetics.

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