

Aesthetic Comparison of Chinese and American Animated Mulan Images

Yang Chen

Department of Film Press and Contents at the Graduate School of Cheongju University, Cheongju-si 28503, Korea.

Abstract: There is a huge contrast between the images of Hua Mulan in Chinese and American literary works. The Chinese people position the role of Hua Mulan in ancient poetry as a hardworking and virtuous woman who honors her parents. The Disney animation Mulan portrays Hua Mulan as an elf with a character full of villains. This paper makes a comparison and contrast between the leading actors in the American Disney film Mulan and the domestic film Mulan, and explains the aesthetic aspects of the Chinese and American Mulan films.

Keywords: Chinese and American Films; Hua Mulan. Aesthetic Dimension; Image Difference

Introduction

Scholar Hu Wenzhong (Kluchhohn) said in the book "Introduction to Cross-cultural Communication": Some cultures are typical, and some are invisible. In fact, many parts of culture are invisible. Some scholars compare culture to an iceberg. What we see is a very small part of it, and what we do not see is a large part. No matter it is explicit or implicit culture, the huge difference between Chinese and American culture is an indisputable reality. This difference is from "national history, social system, ethical belief, literature and art, literature and art; Psychological characteristics, customs, values, thinking mode; It is reflected in people's living habits and local characteristics. The difference in value orientation plays an important role in this cultural difference". Literary works are an important medium to show this difference, and with the integration of novels and film and television technology, the famous Chinese Mulan has become a popular topic among the American people. This paper discusses the aesthetic differences of Hua Mulan in Chinese and American Hua Mulan films from four aspects: aesthetic form, gender, spirituality and enlightenment.

1. Gender dimension

First, the Disney film Mulan is not only portrayed as an independent individual, a national hero who saves the country from death, but also as a rebellious girl who gains self-growth and breaks the shackles of feudal patriarchal society. The American animated film Mulan, on the other hand, is a radical departure from the Chinese image of women. In the film Mulan became a ridiculous role in trouble, make the family is very embarrassed, half crazy half crazy, with a strong spoof nature, let the dog with rice bags running around, arm write a female commandments, matchmaker and dating scene a mess, in the camp ugly. This "silly big sister" type of female role, completely overturned the ancient Chinese women "do not show teeth, do not shake the skirt" tradition, let Hua Mulan turn into Tang. A quixotic character.

The various details in the movie also revealed to pay homage to the consciousness of female subject and appeal: film arranged mulan dating from the start, but mulan did not show his quite clever, exhibited all kinds of myself, but this detail bedding implied the magnolia is not traditional good tradition, shu girl this reality. When the Flower family received the imperial decree of conscription against the enemy, Mulan bluntly advised her father not to join the army. Late at night, Mulan shaved her head, changed into an army uniform and set off on her own. This action is not only to protect the old man, but also for Mulan's deep reflection: maybe, I am not for her father, maybe I just want to prove that I can do something.

However, the gender dimension of Hua Mulan, the protagonist in Chinese films, is relatively weakened: Hua Mulan, as a virtuous woman in ancient times, is very standard, like other ordinary girls, weaving, farming, taking care of her elderly parents, living in peace with her brother. In the poem, Hua Mulan is quiet, skillful and diligent. Mulan gave his father a cup of tea sent water, the home also placed Mulan daily fabric machine, dignified and elegant speech and behavior, it is difficult to connect her and the battlefield. When the father received conscription order, Mulan because of heartache father year high body failure, afraid of father has to go without also, resolutely decided not to tell and leave, women disguised as men. Camp was seen through by fellow villagers, Mulan also bluntly: "My father is a soldier just to do filial piety, never thought to make a career", and hope to be able to have unique skills. Therefore, Hua Mulan, who has been in the war for 12 years, was always a man who maneuvered every single way, while women's military achievements were beyond the reach of that era. Meanwhile, in the face of children's affection, Hua Mulan showed passivity and powerlessness however, but under can let love prince Wen Tai and soft ran princess marry to seek long peace. After the war, in the picture, Hua Mulan, with her hair loose, stands in front of the mirror, in front of the mirror, in front of a female hero, she seems so insignificant.

2. The spiritual dimension

The two American and Chinese films about Mulan have captivated audiences with their emotional drama, and the latter with their humor, but each has an inspirational message for all. The film, full of inspiration and morale, points in the right direction to deal with the dilemma, but due to the constraints of the region, cultural traditions and aesthetic habits, its spiritual dimension is obviously different, and the two films are not immune. The Disney film Mulan is about the protagonist's struggle to achieve self-worth against the constraints of the outside and inside. Mulan in the film to get rid of the bondage of the patriarchal society, no absolute obedience to parental arrangement, good at self-reflection, bold: make blind date Mulan eyes to the battlefield, trying to pursue the value of life in the war; When the enemy attacked the critical moment while the avalanche beat back the enemy, she not only to defend the peace of the motherland with a cavity sincere heart, but also showed superb wisdom and strategy. In fact, Mulan's growth and victory in the war are the concentrated embodiment and symbol of the "American dream", which reflects Americans' praise and respect for the "American dream". It also reflects the American national spirit -- the pursuit of self-salvation, the challenge and resistance to unfair order, and the emphasis on respecting and protecting individual rights. However, China is a nation pursuing collectivism, which emphasizes the value created by individual giving and efforts for the collective and the society. People's self-value also comes from the recognition and reward of the society. The film revolves around the theme of loyalty, filial piety and loyalty, which is also the spiritual aspect depicted in the Chinese film Mulan. In the film, the male lead Mulan place in the patriarchal society framework, Sanconside is the expected norms of behavior, disguised as a man to go to war, loyal to their duties, in the face of despair also called peers soldiers and buried in the desert, as well as to defend their own land and hometown behind. After the war, Hua Mulan refused the emperor's gift and gave up love for peace, which is also the true embodiment of the traditional Chinese national spirit of "indifference to fame and wealth, selfless dedication". When she returned to her hometown, she was praised by the villagers for her honor and wealth, which pushed the spirit of personal service to the top ^[1].

3. Shape dimension

Among many aesthetic dimensions, the morphological dimension is the most basic and intuitive aspect. It is not only the external embodiment of character's quality, but also reflects national elements and characters. Therefore, the character's physical characteristics are the main theme in the film. From the aesthetic dimension, Mulan images in both Chinese and American films have distinct national characteristics. While maintaining Mulan's Eastern image, Disney has experimented a bit. Through western women's comprehensive cognition of Oriental appearance, they draw a picture of ancient Chinese beauty in the minds of Western society. 1. In the film, Mulan is dressed in a traditional Chinese costume, with a pink sheath dress, a red belt and a long crimson skirt that flutters down to the ground and is all silk. A small and exquisite oval face, a pair of thin eyebrows and eyes quite a bit of charm. In the overall image, Mulan seems to exude classical beauty, but her wheaten skin and heavy lips are quite different from those of Oriental beauties. Second, the flexible application of lines in the film puts Mulan's a running, a jump, a look, a smile, all infused with unfettered youth and vitality,

it is gentle, smart and vigorous between everything. In contrast, the image of Hua Mulan in domestic films is more in line with Chinese aesthetic standards. Zhao Wei's big eyes, tall nose and thick eyebrows are very much in line with Chinese people's expectation of Oriental beauty. In the film, Hua Mulan's costume still follows the background of the era at that time, but the clothes under the jacket are two plain colors, gray and khaki. The whole dress is made of cotton and linen, simple and introverted, and the gestures and behaviors also reveal a kind of Oriental etiquette beauty, gentle and intellectual. For the same role, due to the differences between Chinese and Western aesthetic concepts and aesthetic ways, its morphological dimensions are different: Western traditional aesthetics to rational aesthetics, religion, aesthetics and psychology aesthetics as the foundation, mainly based on the abstract analysis of the essence of beauty, passion can't suppress, so that the expression is more enthusiasm is bold and unrestrained, Disney's mulan with gorgeous clothes and deducing the exaggerated behavior the phenomenon, mulan that lively and full of reiki figure throughout the film. However, Chinese traditional aesthetics is deeply influenced by Confucianism. It is the synthesis of empirical aesthetics, ethical aesthetics, social aesthetics and other disciplines, so it emphasizes the "unity of nature and man". In creation and design, it pays attention to meet the needs of humanity, emotion and morality, and pursues image, spirit, "insight" and "character" [2].

4. Enlightenment dimension

From the perspective of indoctrination, Chinese and American films show distinct power discourse due to their different ideologies and cultural leadership. As a nation pursuing individualism, the United States has always attached importance to the pursuit of individual values and advocated the achievement of life through individual struggle. The maximum improvement of individual ability is individual heroism. American animation creators are also in love with the creation of heroes, and the hero complex of Disney series films is a key part of it, and Mulan is one of the representative films. Film, the protagonist Mulan by a confused, ignorant little girl step by step to grow into a successful career, the achievement of self-worth of the heroine, she is not stuck in the parents plan to teach husband and son, flat light life, just into the barracks on the early and late, practice a skill, Careful in the process of fighting the enemy, good at independent thinking, pointing out the correct marching strategy, the final palace rescue, brave and good at fighting. These are exaggerations of the talents and skills of ordinary girls, but they also prove Americans' recognition and appreciation of personal life from another perspective. Mulan and General Li Xiang's final love also proves that they value their own happiness. However, Chinese traditional culture has always paid attention to collectivity and family consciousness, so it pays more attention to the role and value of groups and society in the success and failure of enterprises. Meanwhile, the pursuit of self-abnegation, attaching importance to natural principles and eliminating human desires, and the thought of the collective over the individual have also penetrated into the film plot. Although Mulan is a once-in-a-century beauty, the film doesn't portray her as an extraordinary Superman. The war was a great success. This is not just because of Hua Mulan's life and death struggle with the enemy Rooran. But also because, in this war, with the blood of countless soldiers, countless soldiers fought together. Additional, Hua Mulan moves move to appeal to one's feelings, xiao by reason, do not listen to what one is told, go to support relative Wen Tai to suffer the detail such as heavy loss in plan however, also side proved the advantage that collective action place has. At the end of the film, Hua Mulan House love to win glory for the country, serve the motherland prosperous ending, although reflecting selfless dedication, service of the overall situation, but her bleak eyes or people gave birth to sympathy. There may be other solutions, but what the film conveys to the audience is that they will not hesitate to choose the latter when there is a conflict between personal happiness and national interests, which is more noble and valuable, and this dimension of education exactly conforms to the characteristics advocated by traditional Chinese culture.

5. Conclusion

For thousands of years, the story of Hua Mulan dressed as a woman, joined the army for her father and other adaptations emerged in endlessly, Hua Mulan was given a fresh life, in the long historical years, showed a rare research value and spiritual value. Although the main characters of Disney films and domestic films show great differences in aesthetic dimensions, as a kind of consumer culture and mass culture, it spreads the culture and spirit of the nation.

References

[1] Liu JJ, Shao H. A comparison of the Aesthetic dimensions of Hua Mulan in Chinese and American films [J]. Anhui Literature: Second Half, 2018(9):3.

[2] Liu YC. On the Differences between Chinese and American Mulan images [J]. Writer, 2011(18):2.

About the author:

Yang Chen (1995-), male, Han Nationality, born in Zibo, Shandong province, PhD student, mainly engaged in film and television theory and creation.