

Representation and Interpretation of Chinese Elements in Hollywood Films from a Cross-Cultural Perspective: A Case Study of the *Kung Fu Panda* Film Series

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Abstract: In the context of globalization, Hollywood films have become a significant channel for Chinese cultural elements to reach the world. This study employs high- and low-context cultures theory and cultural dimensions theory to analyze Hollywood's presentation and interpretation of Chinese elements across three dimensions: visual, narrative, and values in the *Kung Fu Panda* film series. Findings reveal that visually, the films achieve a fusion of high-context symbols and low-context narratives through the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese landscape designs, kung fu action imagery, and visual symbols. On the narrative level, the films reconstruct power structures within master-apprentice relationships, integrate Chinese values into coming-of-age stories, and balance collective and individual consciousness in group interactions. In terms of values, the films integrate Eastern and Western mindsets by reconciling individual and collective values, adjusting cultural approaches to conflict resolution, and modernizing traditional concepts. Finally, this study proposes cross-cultural inspirations to reduce cultural misinterpretations and support Chinese culture's global reach, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: Chinese elements; *Kung Fu Panda*; Cross-cultural communication; High- and Low-Context Cultures Theory; Cultural Dimensions Theory

1. Introduction

Nowadays, films and TV shows have become important means of cross-cultural communication and played an irreplaceable role in cultural exchange. The global influence of Hollywood films is an important channel for Chinese elements to go global. This means that Chinese culture can be seen by people from many different places through Hollywood films, such as the *Kung Fu Panda* series. Since the first one came out in 2008, they have gained worldwide popularity, but it has also prompted wide academic discussion. As the internet spreads across the globe and constantly improves, human society is entering an era of information explosion. However, China's cultural outreach currently faces challenges such as misunderstanding of culture and inefficient dissemination. Examining how this film series presents and interprets Chinese elements holds significant reference value for the international dissemination of Chinese culture.

Therefore, this paper aims to integrate high- and low-context cultures theory with cultural dimensions theory to gain deeper insights into how cultural elements adapt within cross-cultural communication, and seeks to provide concrete recommendations for disseminating Chinese culture abroad. Only in this way can Chinese culture be understood and liked by more people around the world, so as to provide a reference for the global outreach of Chinese culture, reduce cultural misinterpretation, and enhance the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication.

2. Research Basis

2.1 High- and Low-Context Cultures Theory

High-and low-context cultures theory was initially developed by American anthropologist Edward

Hall in his book *Beyond Culture* in 1976^[1]. It is now one of the most important frameworks for studying cross-cultural communications. The basic concept is that cultures differ greatly in their reliance on context for the transmission of information. There are two major categories today: high-context cultures and low-context cultures.

In high-context cultures, there is no need for clear spoken words. People place emphasis on having a similar cultural background, and non-verbal cues and implicit meanings within the context itself. Eastern countries such as China and Japan are typical representatives of this kind of culture, which values indirect speech and group consensus. Conversely, low-context cultures such found in Western nations as the USA and Germany favor direct, explicit verbal communication and do not require much shared background knowledge. In cross-cultural communication, the differences in high and low contexts often lead to obstacles in information transmission and understanding. For analyzing how Chinese cultural elements are shown in *Kung Fu Panda*, the high-and low-context cultures theory provides a very important perspective.

2.2 Cultural Dimensions Theory

Geert Hofstede's work in the 1970s provided a framework that allows examination of differences between cultures. This work used data from multiple countries and established a set of factors that indicate features of cultures. The approach that Hofstede developed provides a method for comparing cultural patterns across different populations.

The initial analysis identified four factors. This analysis was later expanded to six factors in total: Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism vs Collectivism, Masculinity vs Femininity, Long-Term vs Short-Term Orientation, and Indulgence vs Restraint^[2]. These factors show significant variation in patterns relating to values across different cultures. In the case of Chinese culture, findings indicate a pattern that emphasizes relationships within groups and families. This pattern also shows that individuals in this context focus on contribution to the larger group. With regard to American culture, data suggest a different pattern, which emphasizes individual achievement and personal expression. The analysis also reveals differences in power distance between these cultures. Chinese culture shows higher acceptance of structure relating to authority. American culture shows a pattern that reflects more equal distribution of power between individuals.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory serves as a useful tool for understanding how *Kung Fu Panda* deals with cultural differences between China and the West. The film's narrative and values inevitably touch upon issues like power relationships and the balance between individual and group, which are central to this theory. In the following chapters, this study will apply this framework to analyze how the film adjusts and combines these different cultural aspects, making the Chinese elements within it understandable and acceptable to a global audience.

2.3 Chinese Elements

Chinese elements refer to the cultural symbol system crystallized through the Chinese nation's long historical evolution. This system incorporates mechanisms for cultural selection and integration, reflecting inherent value judgments. Among these elements, those widely embraced and perpetuated often embody the core spirit of traditional Chinese culture. They resonate with the majority of Chinese people and effectively project the nation's cultural image. In cross-cultural communication, Chinese elements not only serve as markers of cultural identity but also function as mediators for dialogue and mutual understanding between different cultures.

In Hollywood film productions, Chinese elements undergo selection, simplification, and re-creation. Early films often used them as exotic embellishments, with relatively superficial cultural expression. As cultural exchanges deepened, films like *Kung Fu Panda* demonstrated a more conscious strategy of symbolic application: retaining distinct Chinese cultural markers in form while still facing interpretive limitations in conveying cultural substance. When Hollywood films present Chinese elements, they have gradually formed three common models: symbol implantation, story adaptation and value integration. *Kung Fu Panda* series is a typical example of such phenomenon, The *Kung Fu Panda* series exemplifies this trend and demonstrates a feasible channel for cross-cultural communication between commerce and culture.

Chinese elements included in these films are extremely diverse, ranging from architectural scenery, cultural symbols, martial arts moves, daily life habits, to philosophical ideas. These elements are not just

for looks and atmosphere, but also have deep cultural meaning in the story. As the series progresses, the frequency of overt visual symbols diminishes, while the infusion of spiritual essence and value concepts becomes increasingly prominent. This shift may reflect the deepening process of cross-cultural communication from formal borrowing to meaningful integration.

3. Presentation and Interpretation of Chinese Elements

3.1 Visual Dimension

3.1.1 Reproduction of Chinese Landscapes in Scene Design

Kung Fu Panda creates an art-infused “Eastern realm” for audiences through its exquisite visuals and captivating imagery. This space possesses powerful immersive qualities and requires no textual explanation or dialogue, as its inherent form and character alone instantly convey its cultural roots to viewers. This exemplifies a quintessential form of high-context communication: the meaning of the space is embedded within the structure and symbolic details of the imagery, relying on viewers' existing or potentially evoked visual memories of China.

Core settings like the Jade Palace and Valley of Peace clearly incorporate the traditional Chinese architectural principle of central axis symmetry in their spatial layout. The placement of eaves, stone steps, and wooden beams is not random, but rather part of a set of carefully refined visual symbols that recur throughout^[3]. One-to-one replication of specific historical structures is deliberately avoided in this approach, and a universally recognizable Chinese aesthetic is instead created. The process of visual translation is key. It's all about turning rich cultural information into an iconic language. The result is something that even audiences unfamiliar with Eastern culture can instantly understand. While esteemed scholars such as Zheng Zixiang have astutely noted that this approach may result in the symbolization and superficialization of cultural connotations^[4], it unquestionably serves to lower the threshold for cross-cultural understanding, effectively functioning as a strategy for high-context cultural imagery to reach global mass markets.

The film takes this approach further in its presentation of natural landscapes. The composition of mountains, clouds, and negative space embodies the aesthetic essence of Chinese landscape painting—capturing the spirit through form. Simultaneously, the film diminishes geographical realism, instead amplifying the lyrical atmosphere and philosophical resonance of the space^[5]. Viewers won't recognize any specific Chinese landscape, yet they become immersed and resonate with it. The techniques of expressing emotion through borrowed scenery and meaning beyond the painting profoundly reflect the highly contextual cultural imagery within the visuals. The artistic conception resides not in the objects themselves, but in the overall atmosphere they create and the viewer's inner response. This allows audiences to experience an indescribable Eastern aesthetic realm of harmony, balance, and inner cultivation.

3.1.2 Expression of Kung Fu Culture in Action Images

The presentation of kung fu in the *Kung Fu Panda* series is primarily manifested as a highly stylized visual action system. As a high-context symbol rooted in traditional Chinese culture, the philosophical concepts and physical philosophy embodied by kung fu are often difficult to convey directly through dialogue^[6]. The film does not seek to reproduce the martial arts techniques of a specific style with exacting fidelity. Instead, it creates a cross-linguistic kinetic image of kung fu that is almost pure, achieved through precise rhythm control, exaggerated dramatic movements and humorous staging. This approach allows viewers to follow the feelings of the characters and patterns of power without previous background in this form. The design shows intensity and speed and timing through visual means, and this allows understanding without requiring specific background. The findings indicate that the form functions not as representation but as a main element that develops the plot and develops characters and produces moments that provide humor in the presentation. A particular design feature is that the protagonist Po's size contrasts sharply with his mobility. The form that Po shows, which appears large with limited control, differs from the typical form of a lean figure with high control that appears in previous presentations of this type^[7].

Po's success is not built on masterful technique, but rather on his physical attributes, luck, and perseverance. This design essentially represents a selective translation and low-context adaptation of kung fu cultural connotations. It downplays dimensions of Eastern martial arts culture like “years of arduous training” and “technique supremacy,” instead, highlighting a theme closer to Western coming-

of-age narratives and comedic traditions: the individual generating a unique inner drive by recognizing and accepting their true self. This is a positive adaptation, a highly contextualized cultural symbol that, upon entering globalized mass media channels, seeks broader emotional resonance and understanding.

3.1.3 Cross-Cultural Transformation Approaches of Visual Symbols

The recurring imagery in *Kung Fu Panda*, such as the Tai Chi Diagram, red lanterns, bowls, and noodles, are not merely decorative exotic props but serve distinct narrative and cultural translation functions. Within their original cultural context, these symbols carry multiple meanings, representing a high-context environment.

Take the Tai Chi Diagram, for instance. In traditional Chinese culture, the Tai Chi diagram embodies the cosmology of yin and yang mutually supporting each other and the perpetual cycle of creation and renewal, and dialectical thinking—carrying profoundly rich yet abstract meanings. In the film, the Master Oogway's epiphany and Po's mastery of “chi” often emerge within this framework. Essentially, it ‘flattens’ elevated philosophical concepts into narrative threads of inner transformation and unity of opposites, making them accessible to general audiences. While enhancing intuitive communication, this approach inevitably compresses or even strips away the original philosophical context of the symbols.

This reveals a strategic choice at the visual level: prioritizing global audience accessibility over the comprehensive preservation of cultural depth. Such a decision exposes a common dilemma: balancing effective communication with necessary artistic reshaping. Merely praising the Chinese charm of its symbolic usage or offering superficial critiques of its meaning may not fully resolve the semantic transmission challenges between different contexts reflected in the translation process.

3.2 Narrative Dimension

3.2.1 Presentation of Power Structures in Master-Disciple Relationships

The teacher-student relationship in *Kung Fu Panda* does not simply replicate Chinese tradition but instead records it within Hollywood's narrative logic. Hofstede's idea of Power Distance is important for understanding how people in China think about class and authority.

The film may appear on the surface to support the powerful image of the “Master”, but it also quietly challenges the culture of absolute obedience and strict hierarchy behind this image. The relationship between Master Shifu and Po is not just a regular teacher-student kind of thing. The ineptitude of Po, his interrogation of fundamental principles, and his distinctive odyssey compel Master Shifu to modify his techniques and confront his personal constraints. This two-way dynamic process of adjustment dilutes the original high power distance dynamic, shifting it toward collaboration and emotional connection. According to Li's observation, the movie intentionally weakens the strict hierarchical norms, and stresses on the emotional connection of mutual improvement between master and apprentice [8].

Obviously, it caters to different cultural audience's feelings. Western people generally have difficulty relating to or even feeling repulsed by the idea of an unchallengeable, all-powerful master. By centering humor, mutual interaction, and personal growth, the film softens its cultural edges, rendering this relationship rational and moving within a low-context narrative. Yet this “softening” is far from trivial. The film remains rooted in the concept of Smriti, but this time it's not about rigid martial arts doctrine. Instead, it's a belief in self-mastery and universal values applicable to all individuals. This represents a creative reconstruction by Hollywood, drawing from the Chinese relationship model to resonate with global audiences.

3.2.2 Integration of Cultural Values in Growth Stories

The central narrative of the *Kung Fu Panda* trilogy remains the growth journey of the Panda Po. This narrative framework functions like a vessel, infusing concepts of self-cultivation and responsibility from Eastern civilization into the Western-familiar plot template of heroism. Traditional Chinese narratives focus on where one stands within their family and society, as well as becoming morally better, while classic Hollywood models emphasize the individual's own free will and achieving personal goals [9]. The film shrewdly designs Po's trip so that it comprises both the fated hardships of destiny and the inside journey of self-discovery.

This fusion is clearly illustrated throughout the plot. Po's initial transformation from noodle shop apprentice to Dragon Warrior stems not from innate talent but from his persistence and optimism—a relatable interpretation of the Chinese wisdom that “diligence compensates for lack of talent” [10]. He confronts and accepts his panda nature and previous injuries, with inner conflict leading to reconciliation,

which is consistent with the Confucian idea that “Knowing your fate will make you fearless”. In *Kung Fu Panda 3*, Po’s mission changes from personal mastery to communal leadership, needing to balance individual skills with group power - a modern take on the old ideas of cultivating oneself and managing one’s household.

This developmental trajectory essentially seeks a balance within Hofstede's cultural dimensions of Individualism-Collectivism. The film not only extensively portrays Po's personal ideals, struggles, and glorious achievements but also highlights his seamless collaboration with the Furious Five, his emotional bonds with Mr. Ping and his biological parents, and his sense of responsibility toward the entire Valley of Peace [11]. Thus, it does not alienate western audiences with collectivism and also does not lose what is considered the so-called “eastern” cultural essence due to too much focus on individual heroism. This careful calibration is an important kind of adaptive move that lets its values work well in different kinds of places where people live.

3.2.3 Reflection of Collective Consciousness in Group Interactions

In the process of attaining cross-cultural integration, *Kung Fu Panda* serves as a prime illustration of the collectivist cultural attributes of the Chinese populace, by demonstrating the reciprocal influence amongst a multifarious array of ethno-cultural groups. The Furious Five show coordination and support between members, the Panda Village shows assistance and sharing among groups, and the Valley of Peace shows a focus on harmony in the community. This approach using different forms reflects the collectivist values in China and contains a principle that indicates harmony without uniformity.

Instead of simple replication, the film adapts Chinese collectivism for cross-cultural contexts by emphasizing egalitarianism and mutual respect—departing from rigid hierarchical structures and class divisions to portray universal dignity and respect among all characters. Residents in Panda Village have considerable personal space, and Po provides individuals with means to show individuality. The narrative shows the value that an individual has within a group, and it relates collective progress to personal growth. When Po provides instruction to the pandas in martial arts, he develops particular styles that relate to the abilities that each individual has. This approach to instruction that provides individualized methods reflects the educational traditions in China and also shows emphasis on valuing differences between individuals.

The film provides Chinese collective consciousness using symbols in a high-context form such as dances in groups and feasts that groups share. Within the narrative that uses a low-context form, individuals viewing the film can understand relationships between characters and resolutions of conflict in a clear manner, and this reduces barriers to viewing. While depicting inter-group interactions, the film simplifies complexities. China's traditional collectivist values of family-nation sentiment and responsibility-bearing are condensed into universal ideals of unity and mutual aid. Though this enhances cross-cultural relatability, it sacrifices cultural depth.

3.3 Value Dimension

3.3.1 Interaction between Individual Ideals and Group Values

The central narrative of *Kung Fu Panda* is achieved by reconciling the conflicting demands of individuality and collective responsibility. Throughout the narrative of Po's journey, two distinct themes are observed to persistently intertwine, the personal aspirations of the protagonist and his sense of duty to the community. Rather than presenting these as mutually exclusive, the film employs plot development to establish a dynamic, interdependent relationship between them.

Once he was chosen unexpectedly as the Dragon Warrior, Po becomes the focus of people’s expectations which go beyond his personal wishes. His development is not merely about personal success, but about realizing his life's purpose through protecting the Valley of Peace community. Seeking out the source, though it seems to be a personal quest for self, in truth it is a way of strengthening ties to the group, making such a relationship a special kind of power for working together [10]. After he became a master, his task is to create balance during teaching and help nurture his students’ growth. Narrative approach that combines the Chinese culture’s emphasis on collective responsibility with the western preference for individual growth to form a coherent action trajectory.

The film walks a tightrope between Individualism and Collectivism. Jiayue Liu notes that the film presents the scene of collective collaboration in Panda Village vividly, yet it does not deviate from its main storyline of Po’s journey to realize his own worth [12]. Its core is to narratively recreate the relationship between the two: individual growth is necessary for serving the group, and the group gives

individuals room to grow. Together, they create an entangled story framework. Naturally, for cross-cultural communication, this synthesis has to be simplified. The complicated moral system of “cultivate oneself, regulate the family, govern the state, pacify the world” is frequently reduced in films to more straightforward exchanges between personal achievements and group effort, with the deep moral and political meanings somewhat overlooked.

3.3.2 Differences in Cultural Thinking in Conflict Resolution

Kung Fu Panda series has its own way of using traditional Chinese philosophy which focuses on harmony and transformation when dealing with conflicts. Instead of using violence to solve their disputes, the movie puts great stress on showing how conflicts affect each other and change inside themselves.

Po is under suspicion from his co-workers after he was picked at random, but according to how the story moves along, this problem isn't solved by one battle. Rather, the story indicates that it is slowly resolved via the character's ongoing efforts and changes in the main character's teaching methods. In the clash with Lord Shen, the end of the story is not just about a fight. The essence of the story is the hero's search for himself and his deep understanding of the enemy. This great knowledge becomes the spark that stops the cycle of revenge, opening up a new road ahead. By the third part, the way to deal with the final danger is to guide everyone in the group to find and use their own power inside them, which is represented by the strategy of winning without fighting.

Indirectly and preserving relationships, this method has the characteristics of a high-context culture^[1]. But still, the movie does manage to make a kind of cultural translation, changing that Eastern philosophy based on group agreement or power settling into something about people waking up emotionally and growing psychologically. It improves emotional connection, making harmony a core value easier for people all over the world to understand, but at the same time it turns a deep moral idea into a story about personal spirit and team spirit. Therefore, its original complex social implications become diluted.

3.3.3 Expression of Harmony Philosophy and Morality Concepts

Kung Fu Panda explores Chinese philosophy about harmony and righteousness through the story. Po personifies the harmony of differences by combining different kinds of martial arts into his own form of Panda Kung Fu. The Panda Village is thriving in harmony simply because they accept each other.

Po's trip shows how good things are done by the movie. Po stays true to his sense of justice even though he lacks enough power. Once he has power, he devotes himself to protecting the weak; this is similar to putting righteousness first. At the same time, the film explores the general topic of moral change via the redemption of its villain.

This method tries to go beyond simple symbols and get at the real culture underneath. But great ideas such as unity of heaven and man have been made easier by simplifying them to team harmony and upholding justice. Technology empowerment makes it possible for people to express themselves better, but it also makes the original idea less complex and less historically deep. Depth vs Marketability, this is one of the key contradictions that cultural products have when they want to resonate with people all over the world.

4. Implications for Cross-Cultural Communication

4.1 Optimize the Presentation of Oriental Symbols to Reduce Cultural Misinterpretation

The *Kung Fu Panda* film series provides meaningful perspectives on how Chinese culture is visually represented in global film and television, especially through its cross-cultural use of Chinese symbols. By looking at how Chinese elements are visually applied in these movies, we can see that cultural misunderstanding does not come from the visual symbols themselves. Instead, it depends on whether these symbols are carefully chosen, properly interpreted, and placed within a consistent visual and storytelling framework.

The films tend to use visually clear symbols that carry strong emotional meaning. Elements like kung fu, pandas, and tai chi are already well-known worldwide, so audiences can understand their basic ideas without deep cultural background. These elements are not used separately; they are naturally woven into character growth and theme development, instead of being added just as decorative images^[11]. Although this method simplifies some cultural details, it makes the content easier to understand, helps audiences quickly recognize the film's cultural identity, and reduces early misunderstandings.

In terms of presentation, the films gradually shift the meaning of Chinese elements as the story moves forward. At the beginning, these symbols mainly build atmosphere and attract attention. As the plot develops, they become more connected with the characters' self-discovery, personal growth, and philosophical thinking, and spiritual meanings become more important in the story^[13]. This shift from surface to depth helps audiences understand deeper ideas after accepting the visual style, so symbols are not misunderstood as separate or shallow images.

At the same time, the films use clear story contexts to help audiences understand some abstract cultural ideas. For example, the concept of "qi" is not explained directly; it is shown through specific plots and character behaviors, so viewers build an intuitive understanding as the story goes on^[14]. This method reduces the need for prior cultural knowledge and lowers the chance of misinterpretation. Without proper context, these Chinese symbols can easily lose their intended meaning.

The films also reimagine some traditional elements in creative ways. Traditional buildings and ink-wash visuals are turned into more imaginative animated scenes and combined with modern animation technology^[10]. This improves visual attraction and communication efficiency. However, we should recognize that such changes unavoidably reduce some cultural depth. Therefore, this method needs a balance between visual attractiveness and maintaining cultural direction.

When we actively interact with different cultures, our own cultural biases slowly decrease. Kung Fu Panda 3 reduced cultural misrepresentation in its visual design to some degree through Sino-American cooperation and the participation of cultural consultants during production^[15]. This shows that meaningful cross-cultural expression needs a creative perspective that brings together different cultural backgrounds.

In short, the experience of the Kung Fu Panda series shows that improving the presentation of visual symbols and reducing cultural misunderstanding requires a complete plan covering symbol choice, expressive layers, context building, and interpretive methods—not just a single solution. This idea is very useful for representing Chinese culture visually in international film and television communication.

4.2 Enhance Cross-Cultural Narrative Structures to Deepen Cultural Understanding

The Kung Fu Panda series has a story structure that teaches us how to talk to people from different places. The main thing it's good at is getting a lot of different important things to work well together. It doesn't just agree to disagree, but mixes them up into something even better.

After carefully examining the story of the film, its greatest strength is the way it combines uniqueness to a culture with ideas that all people can understand. It's not just showing Chinese things such as Kung Fu and Tai Chi for the sake of it. Instead, it blends those elements into the story so that anyone can relate. It's about growing up, taking care of things, and being friends. Jia Qiyuan and Azahari call this method cultural defamiliarization which means presenting something strange in a familiar way plus aesthetic familiarization which means making something strange appear familiar [16]. This is an essential element of cross-cultural storytelling. A good story has to be a kind of familiar stranger. Attract foreigners with unique cultural elements and use universal themes to evoke emotions, ensuring accurate representation of the culture.

The story is interesting also because it combines high and low context, so it can attract all kinds of cultures. It uses high-context Chinese symbols to add atmosphere and depth to the story, while employing low-context classic plot elements such as conflict and resolution to ensure the story is easy to follow and flows smoothly. The feasibility of this model has also been demonstrated in another case analysis [17]. When dealing with audiences from different cultures, one cannot rely solely on one narrative approach. Instead, the author should adapt the level of directness according to how their audience usually receives information, which guarantees that deep cultural meanings have simple story structures to back them up. That is how cultural messages can be made meaningful to global audiences.

Audience reception habits also require the adaptation of story frameworks from the point of view. The film has many Chinese elements, but it uses a Hollywood-style three-act play structure, which is familiar to people all over the world and makes it easier for them to understand foreign cultures. Peng Yanping summarizes the "extract-adapt-reconstruct" pathway describing this process accurately [18]. Therefore, cultural dissemination is not about forcibly imposing one's own narrative template on others, but rather flexibly adjusting the form so that the cultural core can be adapted to the reception habits of the target audience, only then can the effective transmission take place.

Furthermore, to showcase rich cultural connotations, the story should not follow a single narrative

thread. The movie shows Po's development and ideas about master-apprentice relationships, family love, and community duty. All these elements put together form a complicated story. Huang Ying states that multidimensional representation can reach the essence of culture and cause strong resonance, which makes total sense, because culture is already complicated [19]. We have to know more than just one story about a culture if we want to get the whole picture, because using just one story makes things look one-sided. To know a culture, you have to view it from many perspectives.

4.3 Construct Shared Value Narratives to Develop Cross-Cultural Identity and Value Communication

Cross-cultural communication is a lot harder to communicate values compared to presenting cultural symbols and designing narrative structures. There are huge differences among different cultures. Some of these differences include individualism vs. collectivism and power distance. Value expressions become disconnected from people when they get too fixated on one particular culture. The *Kung Fu Panda* films show us how to make stories that everyone can understand and learn from. Through the characters' growth and team dynamics, the film seamlessly blends personal ideals with a sense of collective responsibility, allowing people from diverse cultural backgrounds to find resonance in the story. Po's path to self-discovery indicates that both personal exertion and the aid of others are necessary. It doesn't mean that one system is better than the other, just that different kinds of values can coexist as we tell stories.

This kind of value integration creates a rather steady base for acknowledgment among individuals and groups. This also demonstrates that in practice, efforts should be made to construct shared values recognized by the public—namely, through universally accessible emotional experiences and moral choices, so that cultural values can achieve broader recognition while respecting differences. It means that people can know and recognize other cultures better through talking and changing their own values.

5. Conclusion

In the face of more and more frequent exchanges of culture around the world, Hollywood films with their mature industrial system and wide international influence take an important position in cross-cultural communication. *Kung Fu Panda* as a relatively successful Hollywood animated text which incorporates Chinese cultural elements serves as a good case study for looking at how Chinese elements get presented and spread in cross-cultural settings. This paper analyzes Chinese elements in the *Kung Fu Panda* films from three aspects: visual, narrative, and values based on high- and low-context cultures theory and cultural dimension theory.

Findings reveal that visually, the films make high-context cultural symbols more recognizable in low-context communication environments through stylized Chinese architectural aesthetics, kung fu movements, and traditional symbols. Narratively, the films recreate mentor-apprentice relationships, coming-of-age stories, and group dynamics, making cross-cultural adjustments for power distance and individualism-collectivism value contrasts. As for the values part, the films use modern ways to show personal wishes, how to solve problems, and ideas about getting along, so they make a fairly even story place that works well with different beliefs about what's important. Therefore, this paper condenses communication wisdom: improving the display of Eastern symbols, perfecting cross-cultural narrative frameworks, and creating shared-value narratives. Cultural communication effectiveness does not depend on how many things are put out there, but rather on those things that can create feelings and values for the audience and still be respectful of other cultures.

However, this paper has its limits. First, only *Kung Fu Panda* animated series is focused, not compared with other kinds of cross-cultural films – like live action *Mulan*. Second, it mainly looks at the film text itself, but not directly look into the real watching experience and reactions from people of different cultures. Future research may incorporate more cross-cultural film and television examples to further explore the communication paths and reception mechanisms of Chinese elements.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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