

Research on the Presentation of Chinese Elements in American Science Fiction Films and Cross-Cultural Communication

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of globalization and the complex relationship between the Chinese and American film industries, integrating Chinese elements into Hollywood science fiction films has drawn significant attention. This study focuses on the perspective of cross-cultural communication. It takes 15 Chinese audiences who have watched relevant films as the research objects, uses the semi-structured interview method, and combines the Uses and Gratifications Theory and Acculturation Theory for research. The results show that the presentation of Chinese elements in American science fiction films is complex and diverse. The integration of characters shows a polarized trend. The integration of scenes enhances the effect by combining real and artistic scenes. Technology integration showcases China's scientific and technological achievements and promotes the plot. At the same time, the presentation effect of Chinese elements affects the emotional response and cultural identity of the audience. A positive presentation can enhance the communication effect, while a negative one can hinder it. This study provides empirical support for the development of cross-cultural communication theories and also offers references for film producers.

Keywords: American science fiction films, Chinese elements, cross-cultural communication, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Acculturation Theory

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

In the context of globalization, cultural communication and exchange have been booming with unprecedented depth and breadth. Film, as a highly influential cultural product, has become a crucial bridge for cross-cultural communication. In recent years, the rapid rise of the Chinese film market has made it the second-largest film market in the world, attracting the attention of many American film producers. Since the Sino-U.S. trade war, the tense relationship between the two countries has spread to the film industry. American film companies have become more cautious when entering the Chinese market [1]. In order to cater to the needs of Chinese audiences, Hollywood films have begun to integrate a large number of Chinese elements, attempting to attract Chinese audiences in this way and thus increase the global box-office revenue of the films. The integration of these Chinese elements is not a simple cultural export but is accompanied by complex cultural adaptation and commercial considerations. Lukinbeal pointed out that Hollywood is a profit-driven phenomenon. It not only

affects the content of film production but also reshapes the film's presentation method to better attract Chinese audiences [2]. Among various types of Hollywood films, science fiction films, with their global market influence and visual spectacles, have become a genre that Chinese audiences pay particular attention to. Therefore, exploring the Chinese elements in American science fiction films has important research value.

American science fiction films play a significant role in the global film market. With their advanced special effects technology, imaginative plot settings, and powerful global distribution networks, they have attracted a large number of audiences worldwide and profoundly shaped the pattern of global cultural communication. For example, the great success of *Avatar* at the global box office demonstrates the powerful influence of American science fiction films. Against this background, the integration of Chinese elements is particularly remarkable. Take *Transformers: Age of Extinction* as an example. The film not only features Chinese actors but also sets some scenes in Chinese cities. At the same time, many Chinese brands are implanted in it. The application of these Chinese elements has triggered extensive discussions. This is not only related to the film's commercial strategy but also involves in-depth cultural communication and exchange.

Although the presentation of Chinese elements in American science fiction films has gradually increased, there are significant differences in their presentation methods and effects. Some films have successfully won the recognition of Chinese audiences through the ingenious integration of Chinese elements, while others have caused audience disgust due to their shallow understanding or stereotypes of Chinese culture. Sun and Li further pointed out that the Chinese elements in American films have undergone a transformation from negative stereotypes to the integration of Chinese-characteristic elements, showing a positive side [3]. However, there are still many shortcomings in this transformation, especially in aspects such as character shaping, scene presentation, and technology integration, which have not fully met the cultural expectations of Chinese audiences.

1.2. Literature Review

Film, as an important medium for cultural communication, has great significance in cross-cultural communication research in the context of globalization. Sima pointed out that American films promote their dissemination in the Chinese market by presenting Chinese cultural elements in an Americanized way and developing them in a typological manner, reducing cultural discount [4]. Yu et al., based on Hofstede's cultural theory, constructed a multi-dimensional framework to study the acceptance of American animated films by Chinese audiences and found that different cultural dimensions have a significant impact on viewing motivations [5]. These studies have revealed the role and influencing factors of films in cross-cultural communication from different perspectives, providing a theoretical and empirical basis for understanding cross-cultural communication phenomena. In addition, some researchers have analyzed how Hollywood films cater to the Chinese market from the perspective of the integration of specific cultural elements.

In recent years, the integration of Chinese elements into American films has become a popular research topic. Chen believed that Hollywood integrated Chinese resources into films earning huge profits while influencing the thoughts, lives, and behaviors of the Chinese people [6]. Lyu pointed out that although the images of Chinese characters in Hollywood films have gradually become more diverse, there are still problems of stereotyping and symbolization [7]. Xiaoyi et al. explored the application stages and characteristics of Chinese elements in Hollywood films and believed that their application is an embodiment of cultural exchange and integration [8]. These studies have analyzed the phenomenon of the integration of Chinese elements into American films from multiple aspects, providing rich perspectives for subsequent research.

In the combined research of cross-cultural communication theories and the dissemination of Chinese elements, scholars have begun to analyze from different theoretical perspectives. Among

them, Uses and Gratifications Theory is widely applied in film audience research. Zhu and Christie examined the relationship between cross-cultural contact, the formation of stereotypes of Americans, and the viewing of Hollywood films by Chinese college students from the perspective of this theory [9]. Zhao, by evaluating the satisfaction of Chinese audiences when watching American films, found that audiences seek satisfaction in films, and their viewing preferences affect their understanding of American culture [10]. Su believed that Hollywood films meet the needs of Chinese audiences for entertainment, visual pleasure, etc., and simultaneously become a negotiation place for different values [11]. These studies show that Uses and Gratifications Theory helps understand the viewing behavior of audiences and their acceptance of films.

At the same time, American films need to adapt to the Chinese culture when entering the Chinese market. Chen R and Liu Y pointed out that the reason why audiences have a low evaluation of culturally hybrid films is that they lack the ability to distinguish between hybrid cultures and local cultures [12]. Ma R and Wang X emphasized that transnational films have many limitations such as over-simplification when presenting Eastern cultures and called for strengthening cultural accuracy and sensitivity [13]. These studies provide references for understanding the acculturation process and problems of foreign films in the Chinese market.

1.3. Research Theme

Although existing research in the field of cross-cultural communication has comprehensively explored the Chinese elements in Hollywood films, there are still some deficiencies. First, most existing studies focus on the presentation of Chinese elements in Hollywood films and lack specific research on the presentation methods and effects of Chinese elements in American science fiction films. Second, most existing studies start from the perspective of film producers, exploring the commercial value and cultural export of Chinese elements, while rarely analyzing the acceptance of Chinese elements and cross-cultural communication effects from the perspective of audiences. Third, most existing studies use quantitative analysis methods and lack in-depth exploration of the emotional responses and cultural identities of audiences.

This study aims to fill this gap. By using the semi-structured interview method, it conducts in-depth exchanges with 15 Chinese audiences who have watched relevant films to obtain their real feelings and views on the Chinese elements in the films and deeply analyzes the Chinese elements in American science fiction films, sorting out their categories and forms of expression.

In terms of theoretical application, this study is guided by the Uses and Gratifications Theory. Starting from the perspective of audience needs, it explores how Chinese elements meet the needs of Chinese audiences in terms of cultural identity, emotional resonance, etc. At the same time, with the help of Acculturation Theory in cross-cultural communication theory, it analyzes the process of American science fiction films achieving cultural adaptation through the integration of Chinese elements and the impact of this process on cross-cultural communication effects.

Deeply analyzing the presentation models, characteristics of Chinese elements in American science fiction films and their impact on cross-cultural communication effects can not only reveal the role of Chinese elements in promoting cultural exchanges, shaping national images, and influencing audience cognition, providing empirical support for the development of cross-cultural communication theories, but also, based on the research results, provide practical guidance for the international communication strategies of Chinese culture and cultures of various countries around the world. It promotes understanding and mutual respect among different cultures in cross-cultural communication and promotes the diverse co-existence and common development of global cultures.

2. Research Methods

2.1. Selection of Research Objects

This study uses the semi-structured interview method. The research objects are Chinese audiences who have watched American science fiction films containing significant Chinese elements between 2004 and 2024. Through methods such as posting recruitment information on mainstream social media platforms like Weibo and RedNote and collaborating with film-lover clubs, 15 representative audiences are selected. Ensure that there are differences in the age, gender, region, and cultural background of the interviewees to cover different viewing perspectives and cultural experiences. Detailed information is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Basic information of 15 interviewees.

Number	Age (years old)	Gender	Occupation	Region	Impressive Film
1	30	Male	Enterprise Employee	Liaoning	<i>2012</i>
2	32	Female	Online Illustrator	Beijing	<i>Avatar</i>
3	45	Male	Self-employed Merchant	Shanghai	<i>Iron Man</i>
4	28	Female	Media Practitioner	Zhejiang	<i>Her</i>
5	35	Male	Engineer	Shanghai	<i>Gravity</i>
6	22	Female	Undergraduate Student	Chongqing	<i>Pacific Rim</i>
7	24	Male	Master Student	Hunan	<i>Lucy</i>
8	39	Female	Civil Servant	Sichuan	<i>Transformers: Age of Extinction</i>
9	27	Male	Bank Clerk	Shandong	<i>Edge of Tomorrow</i>
10	33	Female	Accountant	Guangdong	<i>The Martian</i>
11	28	Male	Salesperson	Hubei	<i>Independence Day: Resurgence</i>
12	40	Female	Translator	Shanghai	<i>Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets</i>
13	24	Male	Master Student	Shaanxi	<i>Pacific Rim Uprising</i>
14	53	Male	Doctor	Jiangsu	<i>Dune</i>
15	46	Female	Teacher	Jiangxi	<i>Moonfall</i>

2.2. Development of Interview Outline

Based on Uses and Gratifications Theory and Acculturation Theory in cross-cultural communication theory, starting from the audience's perception of Chinese elements in films, the interview asks about the scenes where they first noticed the Chinese elements in the films, their initial impressions of these elements, etc. Regarding the categories and forms of expression of Chinese elements, the audience is asked to list the impressive Chinese elements and describe their presentation methods. In terms of presentation and integration methods, it explores the role and rationality of Chinese elements in plot advancement, scene construction, and character shaping in the film. For the establishment of emotional bonds, it understands the emotional responses of the audience when they see Chinese elements, whether they have cultural identity and emotional resonance due to these elements, and the

impact of these emotional experiences on their evaluation of the film and acceptance of cross-cultural communication. During the interview process, flexible follow-up questions are asked according to the audience's answers to deeply dig out key information.

2.3. Implementation of Interviews

An online one-on-one interview form is adopted, and the interviews are arranged according to the time and willingness of the interviewees. Before the interview, the research purpose and process are introduced in detail to the interviewees, and recordings are made after obtaining their consent. The interview time is controlled within 30-60 minutes to create a relaxed atmosphere and encourage the interviewees to fully express their views. After the interview, the recorded content is promptly transcribed into text materials word-for-word to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the information.

2.4. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is used to conduct a systematic analysis of the interview texts to deeply explore the information related to Chinese elements in American science fiction films. When analyzing the interview data, the author not only pays attention to the direct feedback of the interviewees on Chinese elements but also, based on Uses and Gratifications Theory, explores whether they have obtained satisfaction (such as emotional resonance, cultural identity) from the Chinese elements in the films. At the same time, Acculturation Theory helps the author analyze how the audience views these elements and whether they have gone through different stages of cultural adaptation (such as acceptance, misunderstanding, rejection, etc.). First, read all the interview data to generally understand the overall views and feedback directions of the audience on the Chinese elements in American science fiction films. Then, code line by line, marking the key sentences and paragraphs related to Chinese elements of the 15 interviewees. Next, summarize and refine the coded content to form preliminary themes, as shown in Table 2. Then, integrate and optimize the preliminary themes, remove duplicate and redundant themes, and determine the final themes, as shown in Table 3. Finally, conduct an in-depth analysis of the themes in combination with the theory to explore the presentation models, characteristics of Chinese elements in American science fiction films, and the internal mechanism of establishing emotional bonds with Chinese audiences, as shown in Table 4.

Table 2: Preliminary themes formed by open coding.

Initial Category	Original Concept	Attitude	Corresponding Number
A3. Characters Promote the Plot	The "Crimson Typhoon" mecha, good integration in the plot-promoting design, insufficient cultural connotation of the character, feeling proud, recognizing the possibility of cultural innovation, deeply exploring traditional cultural elements	Positive	6
A1. Poor Character Shaping	Chinese actors, filming at Yongdingmen, small role of the character, stiff scene, thin character, feeling both affectionate and disappointed, pondering the presentation method, more important Chinese characters	Negative	3
A2. Insufficient Character Connotation	Chinese scientist or soldier characters, average integration in promoting the plot, single character image, having a sense of freshness but feeling insufficient, pondering the image creation, more comprehensive and rich characters	Negative	14
A4. Characters Promote the Plot	The Chinese military's participation in the confrontation plan, reasonable plot, no prominent Chinese characters, feeling proud, re-recognizing China's international role, deeply showing the cooperation story	Positive	9
A5. Limited Role of Characters	Angelababy's character, limited role of the character, not-full character, feeling both affectionate and regretful, pondering the presentation quality, more abundant Chinese characters	Negative	11

Table 2: (continued).

A6. Limited Integration of Characters	Kris Wu's character's clothing, distinctive clothing but average integration, insufficient cultural connotation of the character, feeling proud yet insufficient, pondering the clothing culture dissemination, in-depth integration of elements	Negative	12
A7. Characters Promote the Plot	Chinese actors, scenes in Qingdao, Chinese lines, promoting the plot and showing the local features, insufficient cultural connotation of some characters, feeling proud, understanding the urban and mecha culture, deeply exploring the cultural connotation	Positive	13
A8. Successful Integration of Characters	Kelly Yu's character, the Chinese re-entry module, successful integration in promoting the plot, insufficient cultural connotation of the character, feeling proud, understanding China's scientific and technological strength, showing the spirit of scientific and technological innovation	Positive	15
A9. Realistic Scene Presentation	Taipei's life scenes, presenting real and rich content, no prominent Chinese characters, feeling affectionate, understanding the cultural diversity of Taiwan, deeply presenting Taiwanese culture	Positive	7
A10. Rich Integration of Elements	Chinese actors, scenes in Hong Kong, brand placement, good integration and promoting the plot, not-full characters, feeling proud, understanding the international influence of commercial culture, deeply showing Chinese culture	Positive	8
A11. Beautiful Scene Atmosphere	"Hallelujah Mountains" (inspired by Zhangjiajie's landscape), reasonable artistic processing and good atmosphere, no Chinese characters, feeling proud, re-recognizing the landscape value, in-depth integration of the landscape and the plot	Positive	2
A12. Beautiful Scene Atmosphere	Filming in Shanghai, reasonable artistic treatment and good atmosphere, no prominent Chinese characters, feeling proud, re-recognizing Shanghai culture, showing the details of Shanghai life	Positive	4
A13. Recognition of Scientific and Technological Strength	"Noah's Ark" in Tibet and its scenic architecture, reasonable plot and scene, no prominent Chinese characters, feeling proud, America's recognition of China's strength, presenting more Chinese values	Positive	1
A14. Scientific and Technological Scenes Promote the Plot	"Tiangong-1", promoting the plot with realistic scenes, no Chinese characters, feeling proud, deepening the understanding of aerospace culture, integrating more aerospace stories	Positive	5
A15. Science and Technology Promotes the Plot	The rescue of "Helios", reasonable in promoting the plot, no prominent Chinese characters, feeling proud, understanding the aerospace strength and the spirit of cooperation, presenting more aerospace stories	Positive	10

Table 3: Final themes formed by axial coding.

Main Category	Sub-category	Initial Category
C1. Character Integration	B1. Character Portrayal	A1. Poor Character Shaping
		A2. Insufficient Character Connotation
	B2. Role of Characters	A3. Characters Promote the Plot
		A4. Characters Promote the Plot
		A5. Limited Role of Characters
		A6. Limited Integration of Characters
		A7. Characters Promote the Plot
		A8. Successful Integration of Characters
C2. Scene Integration	B3. Realistic Scenes	A9. Realistic Scene Presentation
		A10. Rich Integration of Elements
	B4. Scene Optimization	A11. Beautiful Scene Atmosphere
		A12. Beautiful Scene Atmosphere

Table 3: (continued).

Main Category	Sub-category	Initial Category
C3. Technology Integration	B5. Science and Technology Promotes the Plot	A13. Recognition of Scientific and Technological Strength
		A14. Scientific and Technological Scenes Promote the Plot
		A15. Science and Technology Promotes the Plot

Table 4: Typical relational structures of main categories.

Typical Relational Structure	Connotation
Character Integration—Scene Integration—Technology Integration—Audience Feedback and Expectations	The different manifestations of character integration, diverse scene-integration situations, and specific ways of technology integration jointly influence the audience’s emotions and cognition, thereby triggering various expectations of the audience regarding the presentation of Chinese elements in films.
Scene Integration—Character Integration—Technology Integration—Film Cultural Communication and Value Shaping	Scene integration provides a background for the display of characters and technology elements. Character integration endows the story with a human dimension, and technology integration adds science-fiction and innovative elements. The three cooperate with each other to jointly spread Chinese culture, shape the cultural value and international influence of the film, and are also constantly improved under the influence of audience feedback.
Technology Integration—Character Integration—Scene Integration—Enlightenment for the Film Industry Development	Technology integration promotes the innovation of film plots. Character integration attracts the attention of the audience, and scene integration enhances the appeal of the film. The effective combination of the three provides a direction for the development of the film industry to meet the needs of the audience and promote the international development of the film industry. The audience’s expectations also offer ideas for the improvement of the industry.

3. Research Results

Based on the coding and analysis of the interview data, the presentation of Chinese elements in American science-fiction films exhibits a complex and diverse trend. In the dimension of character integration, there is a distinct polarization. On one hand, the interviews mentioned that film producers sometimes deliberately cast Chinese celebrity-driven actors in insignificant Chinese character roles merely to attract young Chinese audiences. For example, “Angelababy’s role, with a limited role and an under-developed character” (corresponding to “A5 Limited Role of Characters”) and “Kris Wu’s character’s clothing, with characteristic clothing but average integration and insufficient character cultural connotation” (corresponding to “A6 Limited Integration of Characters”). This reflects that in character settings, film producers overly emphasize the commercial appeal of celebrity-driven actors while neglecting the value of the characters in the plot and the shaping of cultural connotations. These characters often have a stereotypical image and a weak role in the film, merely serving as a symbolic existence, and it is difficult to display rich cultural heritage and three-dimensional character traits. This not only fails to meet the audience’s expectations for character depth and functionality in Uses and Gratifications Theory but also indicates that in the process of cultural adaptation, film producers do not accurately grasp the real cultural needs of Chinese audiences. They only use celebrity-driven

actors as a tool to attract attention and cannot fundamentally satisfy Chinese audiences' needs for character richness and cultural identity.

On the other hand, some characters play an excellent role in promoting the plot. For example, the "Crimson Typhoon" mecha in *Pacific Rim*, with its unique design and crucial role in the battle, successfully integrates Chinese mecha culture into the film plot and wins the recognition of the audience. Plots such as the Chinese military's participation in the confrontation plan also show China's important role in international cooperation from the side, allowing the audience to have a new understanding of China's image. This meets the audience's need for characters to play a positive role in film narration and, to a certain extent, establishes an emotional connection with the audience.

In terms of scene integration, films combine real scenes with artistic scenes, bringing rich visual experiences and cultural feelings to the audience. Scenes that present real-life content, such as the life scenes in Taipei, show the diverse culture of the Taiwan region with delicate brushstrokes, satisfying the audience's pursuit of cultural authenticity and enhancing the audience's cultural identity. Artistically processed scenes that create a beautiful atmosphere, like the "Hallelujah Mountains" in *Avatar* inspired by the landscape of Zhangjiajie and the artistically-processed Shanghai scenes in *Her*, not only enhance the aesthetic value of the film but also allow the audience to view China's natural landscape and urban culture from a new perspective. For example, in *Pacific Rim Uprising*, the interviewees mentioned that the film not only shot scenes in Shandong, China, showing the unique urban style, but also combined with the artistic presentation of Chinese landmark buildings such as the Oriental Pearl Tower in Shanghai. Even the driver training base was set in China, and the most advanced technology company in the film was also from China. Real scenes enhance cultural identity, while artistic scenes expand the cultural horizon through aesthetic appeal. The two complement each other and jointly promote cross-cultural understanding and communication.

In the aspect of technology integration, American science-fiction films showcase China's strength in the scientific and technological field, especially in the aerospace field, through plots such as the "Noah's Ark" in Tibet, the "Tiangong-1", and the rescue of the "Helios". These technological elements not only play a crucial role in promoting the plot but also deepen the audience's understanding of Chinese aerospace culture and meet the audience's psychological needs for the display of China's scientific and technological development achievements, triggering the audience's national pride. This presentation method effectively enhances the influence of Chinese scientific and technological culture in cross-cultural communication and promotes communication and understanding between different cultures.

From the perspective of establishing an emotional bond with Chinese audiences, the presentation effect of Chinese elements in American science-fiction films directly affects the audience's emotional response and cultural identity. When Chinese elements are integrated into films in a positive, reasonable, and audience-need-compliant way, they can successfully stimulate positive emotions such as pride and affection in the audience, prompting the audience to have a strong sense of cultural identity and emotional resonance. This, in turn, enhances the audience's evaluation of the film and their acceptance of the cross-cultural information conveyed by the film. Conversely, if the presentation of Chinese elements is inappropriate and fails to meet the audience's expectations, it will lead to negative emotions such as disappointment and regret in the audience, weakening the emotional connection between the audience and the film and hindering the cross-cultural communication effect.

4. Research Discussion

The complex results of the presentation of Chinese elements in American science-fiction films are related to many factors, which are closely related to the film market environment and the cultural adaptation process in cross-cultural communication.

With the continuous enhancement of China's comprehensive national strength, Chinese elements are increasingly occupying an irreplaceable position on the world cultural value stage [14]. From the commercial considerations of film producers, in the context of increasingly fierce competition in the global film market, in order to expand the international market share and increase the commercial revenue of films, American film producers attempt to attract the huge Chinese audience group by incorporating Chinese elements. The phenomena of some poorly-shaped and connotation-lacking characters may be because when pursuing commercial interests, film producers overly focus on short-term market appeal, simply using Chinese-character roles as a commercial gimmick while neglecting the in-depth exploration of Chinese cultural connotations and the elaborate shaping of characters. In terms of cultural adaptation, this approach fails to truly understand the Chinese audience's needs for the cultural depth and richness of characters, resulting in a deviation between the character presentation and the Chinese audience's cultural expectations.

In the aspect of scene integration, film producers fully recognize the unique value of real scenes and artistic scenes in attracting audiences. Meeting the audience's pursuit of cultural authenticity is an effective strategy for films to adapt to audiences of different cultures in cross-cultural communication. Artistic scenes, with their unique visual effects and aesthetic experiences, can enhance the artistic quality and market competitiveness of films and attract a wider audience group. By combining the two, film producers attempt to find a balance between cultural adaptation and commercial success, meeting the emotional needs of Chinese audiences for local culture while taking into account the aesthetic preferences of global audiences. It should be noted that although real scenes can enhance the credibility of culture, cultural identity not only depends on the visual real-life presentation but is also affected by narrative methods, character shaping, and cultural values. Narrative strategies in the Chinese way and Chinese-led values are particularly important for the film to obtain cultural identity.

In terms of technology integration, with the increasing influence of China in the global scientific and technological field, American film producers' inclusion of Chinese technological elements in films is not only a reflection of the development trend of science and technology in the real world but also a strategy to attract audiences. Elements that showcase China's scientific and technological strength can not only add novelty and attraction to films, meet the audience's curiosity about scientific and technological information and their attention to China's development achievements, but also promote the exchange of scientific and technological cultures between different countries in cross-cultural communication. In the competition of the film market, the integration of such technological elements helps to enhance the competitiveness of films and makes them more attractive in the international market.

From the perspective of Chinese audiences, audiences have a natural cultural affinity and emotional expectation for Chinese elements. In the framework of Uses and Gratifications Theory, audiences expect to obtain emotional satisfaction, cultural identity, and information acquisition through the Chinese elements in films during the viewing process. When the Chinese elements in films can accurately reflect the characteristics of Chinese culture, showcase China's development achievements, and play a positive role in film narration, the audience's needs are met, resulting in positive emotional responses and high film evaluations. Conversely, when Chinese elements are poorly presented due to excessive market-catering and piling-up, the audience's expectations are not fulfilled, and they will have a negative evaluation of the film. Individual differences among audiences, such as cultural background, aesthetic level, and viewing experience, also affect their acceptance and evaluation criteria for Chinese elements in films, further intensifying the differences in the presentation effects of Chinese elements among audiences.

5. Conclusion

This study conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 Chinese audiences who had watched American science-fiction films containing significant Chinese elements between 2004 and 2024. By combining Uses and Gratifications Theory and Acculturation Theory, it explored the presentation methods, characteristics of Chinese elements in American science-fiction films, and their impact on cross-cultural communication effects. The study analyzed the forms of expression of Chinese elements in films from three dimensions: character integration, scene integration, and technology integration, and further explored how these elements affect the audience's emotional response and cultural identity.

The research found that the presentation of Chinese elements in American science-fiction films is complex and diverse. In terms of character integration, there is a significant polarization. Some characters are poorly shaped and lack cultural depth, merely serving as commercial gimmicks, while others successfully promote the plot and showcase the characteristics of Chinese culture, winning the recognition of the audience. In terms of scene integration, films combine real scenes with artistic scenes, not only satisfying the audience's pursuit of cultural authenticity but also enhancing the aesthetic value of the film and strengthening the audience's cultural identity. In the aspect of technology integration, by showing China's achievements in aerospace and other fields, films not only promote the plot but also inspire the audience's national pride and promote the international dissemination of Chinese scientific and technological culture.

In addition, the research also found that the presentation effect of Chinese elements directly affects the audience's emotional response and cultural identity. When Chinese elements are integrated into films in a positive, reasonable, and audience-need-compliant way, they can stimulate the audience's sense of pride and emotional resonance, enhancing the film's evaluation and cross-cultural communication effect. Conversely, if the presentation is inappropriate, it will lead to the audience's disappointment and regret, weakening the emotional connection and hindering cultural communication.

Although this study has revealed, to a certain extent, the presentation model of Chinese elements in American science-fiction films and its impact on cross-cultural communication, there are still some limitations. First, the sample size of the research is limited. Only 15 audiences were interviewed, which may not fully reflect the diverse views of Chinese audiences. Second, the research is mainly based on the subjective feedback of the audience, lacking in-depth analysis of the intentions of film producers and cultural adaptation strategies. In addition, the research does not involve the acceptance differences of the same Chinese elements among audiences with different cultural backgrounds. Future research can be further expanded in this regard.

Future research can be carried out in the following directions. First, expand the sample size and include audiences from different regions and cultural backgrounds to obtain more comprehensive feedback. Second, combine interviews with film producers or internal materials to deeply analyze the decision-making process and commercial considerations of integrating Chinese elements. Third, use the method of cross-cultural comparison to study the acceptance differences of Chinese elements in American science-fiction films among audiences from different countries, and further explore the universality and particularity of cultural adaptation. In addition, with the continuous enhancement of the international influence of Chinese culture, future research can also focus on the cross-cultural communication strategies and effects of Chinese films in the international market.

The significance of this study lies in revealing the presentation model of Chinese elements in American science-fiction films and its impact on cross-cultural communication, providing empirical support for the development of cross-cultural communication theories. At the same time, the research results also provide useful references for film producers, reminding them to balance commercial

interests and cultural connotations when integrating Chinese elements to better meet the cultural expectations of the audience and promote the diverse co-existence and common development of global cultures.

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