

# A Study on Cross-cultural Dissemination of Local Movies from the Perspective of Cultural Export Taking "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant" and "Xu Sanguan" as Examples

Ruiwen Lv<sup>1</sup> Yujie Chen<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> School of Journalism and Communication, Huanggang Normal University, Huanggang, Hubei 438000, China  
<sup>1</sup> Corresponding author.

## ABSTRACT

Although both China and South Korea cultures are parts of the East Asian cultural circle, they have different goals for the output and adaptation of movies. The article takes Chinese author Yu Hua's "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant" as an example and analyzes the works from various perspectives such as cross-cultural communication in South Korea, reconstruction of local Korean films, and the text of "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant". The aim is to study the localization construction of Korean films from the perspective of cultural export research, and provide opinions and suggestions on the cultural export of Chinese films.

**Keywords:** Cultural export, Cross-cultural communication, Yu Hua, "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant".

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2000, the representative work of Chinese author Yu Hua, "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant" was selected as the "100 must-read books" by South Korea's Central Daily News. The influence of his original novels on the Korean people is evident. This article analyzes from various perspectives such as cross-cultural communication, local film reconstruction, and the text of "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant". Finally, the research results of this paper are drawn: inspiration for Chinese films is drawn from the case study of film localization construction in cross-cultural research of "Xu Sanguan".

## 2. A REVIEW OF CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

With the development of the internet, people have chosen a wider range of media channels, and electronic and terminal media are more easily chosen by people. From text to video, the process of cross-border and cross-cultural communication in the past was relatively simpler. Therefore, the

perspective of cross-cultural communication is an inevitable trend.

### 2.1 Cross-cultural Communication

After the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between China and South Korea in 1992, the two countries had good exchanges in various fields. Yu Hua is a representative writer loved by the South Korean people. His works such as "To Live" and "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant" have been translated into Korean by South Korean publishers, making them best-selling works. His Chinese film "To Live", adapted from the original text, has won multiple international awards. In this situation, the film "Xu Sanguan" directed and starred by Korean artist Ha Jung-Woo made it to the big screen in 2015 and was deeply loved by the Korean people.

The rise of Korean film and television culture in the century long transformation is not smooth sailing, but actively promoting the integration and exchange of traditional and modern cultures in the context of seeking multicultural development. Korean films not only exhibit a diversified development trend in themes, but also exhibit a special cultural affinity in content. They not only

dare to accept modern civilization, but also maintain their own national cultural traditions. This spirit has played a positive role in promoting the development of Korean films. From this point, it can be seen that compared to Chinese films, Korean films pay more attention to the cultivation of humanistic spirit and the cultivation and development of national culture. The integration of excellent traditional and modern Korean culture is the goal pursued by many outstanding directors.

## **2.2 Research on Cross-cultural Communication**

From a broad perspective, cross-cultural communication refers to cultural exchange and communication activities between different cultural forms and communication receptors in different cultural backgrounds. The process of communication and interaction is manifested as the communication of cultural information and cultural communication behavior between different cultural transmission receptors. Cross-cultural communication refers to the process of communication, infiltration, collision, transformation, and sharing of cultural elements in different cultural forms on a global scale. These behaviors and processes have had a cultural impact on different countries, ethnicities, groups, and even the entire human society in the world. From the perspective of foreign cultural exchanges, the greatest significance of Chinese culture going abroad lies in its operable communication mode, which integrates elements of cross-cultural communication into traditional communication modes, greatly expanding the scope and depth of communication. On the basis of Lasswell's 5W communication model, Braddock proposed the 7W communication model, which is the most widely used one in communication.

## **3. THE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION THOUGHT OF "CHRONICLE OF A BLOOD MERCHANT"**

Literary works are part of the economic market and are gradually showing a trend towards commercialization. Many Korean readers come into contact with Yu Hua's works through purchasing behavior, which is not a temporary phenomenon, but has continued to this day. His works continue to be loved by Korean readers because the narrative and themes depicted in Yu Hua's works resonate with Korean readers.

### **3.1 The Popularity of "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant"**

The original work "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant" tells the story of Xu Sanguan's 30 year life experience, spanning special periods such as the "Great Leap Forward" and "Cultural Revolution" in Chinese history. The film "Xu Sanguan" focuses on South Korea from 1953 to 1964 after the Korean War. Although they are all based on a period of history, the original works rely on historical backgrounds to integrate personal life experiences into the entire era, and in turn, it is the special historical era that shaped Xu Sanguan's life. However, in the movie, the post-war society disappeared into a vague background.

On September 23, 2014, Seoul News reported that a poll conducted by "Da Bao Shu Ku" found that Yu Hua was named the Chinese author with the highest sales of Chinese literature in the past decade. To this day, Yu Hua's novels such as "Cries in the Drizzle", "To Live", "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant", "Brothers", and "The Seventh Day" have all been translated into Korean and distributed in South Korea. In 1994, the film "To Live" was released in China and landed in South Korea in May 1995.

### **3.2 The Communication Thought of "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant" and "Xu Sanguan"**

The novel "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant" is the most prominent musical work among Yu Hua's works. He divides the musicality and repetitive narrative techniques that run through the entire story into three parts to explore.

The first is the "repeated story of selling blood", where each blood selling has a different cause and process. The second is "repeated narration", such as what Xu Sanguan would do after selling his own blood, or whether Yulan would burst into tears when she heard that people around her were humiliated. The third is "repeated narration of words and sentences". Its research is limited to narrative methods, expression techniques, and literary effects applied, while being limited to holistic research.

Xu Yulan is the wife of Xu Sanguan in the novel, and the film separates her from the image of a loving mother, neglecting her portrayal of Xu Sanguan's wife. Yile grows up with her father in the novel, while Yile only serves as a tool to guide the

revival of fatherly love in the film. Overall, his research has narrowed down the negative aspects compared to the characters in the novel. The fundamental reason for this phenomenon lies in the themes of the two works. Due to the differences in themes, it will inevitably bring different fates to the characters, thus creating different personalities.

#### **4. THE CROSS-CULTURAL ATTEMPT AND COMMUNICATION PROCESS OF "CHRONICLE OF A BLOOD MERCHANT"**

Yu Hua tells about people and things in China, but it resonates worldwide. Yu Hua's works' contemplation of life and questioning of fate are themselves important parts of human literature, increasingly resonating with the spirit of Korean readers worldwide.

##### ***4.1 The Process and Practice of Cross-cultural Adaptation of "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant"***

In 2000, the interest of Koreans in Chinese literature shifted from the Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan regions to the mainland, from Jin Yong, Hong Kong style martial arts, desktop romance, to Mo Yan, Yu Hua, and Su Tong. With the recognition of avant-garde literature among Koreans, the name "Yu Hua" is already well-known to everyone in their hearts. Whether it is "To Live" or "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant", his novels are deeply popular among Koreans, especially the classic character "Xu Sanguan", which resonates with many people.

"Chronicle of a Blood Merchant" is a classic work by Yu Hua, which tells the story of how Xu Sanguan relied on his own blood to overcome difficulties and hardships time and time again, until he was old and no one wanted to take him in. It is a movie full of satire. "Xu Sanguan" is not only a simple literary hero, but also a true portrayal of each of people.

Firstly, Korean director Ha Jung-Woo removed the words "blood selling" from the title of the released film. He first weakened the ceremonial plot of selling blood literally, and only once in the movie did he provide a detailed account of the process of selling blood. However, the movie intentionally blurred the ritual and shifted it towards the relationship between father and son.

The director and lead actor, Ha Jung-Woo, once stated that when he read the original work and directed this film, he was attracted by the warm and profound father son relationship in the text, so he had different focuses. In the original novel, regarding the illness of Yile, Xu Yulan, as a mother, did not actually help much. She mainly relied on the protagonist Xu Sanguan as a father, who sold blood all the way to finally have the money to heal Yile's illness. In the film, the role of Xu Yulan as a mother was added. By the time Xu Sanguan sold blood all the way to the hospital, Xu Yulan had already donated her organ to Yile the transplant was successful. The ending also changes from the absurd satire and thought-provoking elements of the original work to a warm and affectionate family. The ending of the film becomes a family sitting together eating the imagined food during the famine, which actually has a certain sense of detachment. However, this happy ending more caters to the audience's appetite, which is precisely in line with the commercial positioning of the film.

##### ***4.2 The Communication Process and Path Form of "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant"***

Yu Hua's "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant" was adapted into the movie "Xu Sanguan" by Korean director Ha Jung-Woo in 2015. As the first modern novel in Chinese Mainland adapted in Korean style, this film basically continues the story structure of "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant". This novel was translated into South Korea in 1999 and adapted into a drama in 2003. After more than ten years, it was ultimately made into a Korean style film. The combination of Chinese novels and Korean films inevitably involves comprehensive issues of cross-cultural, cross-media, and cross-language communication, which is a major event in the history of literary exchange between China and South Korea.

With the success of "To Live", Yu Hua's other works gradually entered the sight of Koreans, thus making "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant" more familiar to the public. Especially the protagonist Xu Sanguan, who stubbornly survived the difficult life, has resonated with many Korean readers. The novel "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant" has received unprecedented support and praise in South Korea. The book "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant" achieved great success in South Korea, which is a beautiful scenery line in the history of modern Korean literature. To this day, "Chronicle of a

"Blood Merchant" remains the most popular modern literary work in South Korea, not only recognized for its literary value by professional and ordinary readers, but also brought to the stage through dramatic means.

For Korean films, remaking Western and Japanese literary works is no longer unusual, but remaking contemporary novels of Chinese Mainland is the first attempt of Korean films. Due to media restrictions, the plot of "Xu Sanguan" has been greatly reduced, especially during the 11 year period, Xu Sanguan sacrificed his life to sell blood to raise money for his son Yile.

Compared to the drama "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant", the film "Xu Sanguan" more embodies the fatherly love for human nature, thus shaping a perfect father image. Due to the removal of the unique historical background and significant changes from the original work in the movie, the term "blood" cannot be fully reflected. The movie chooses a more universal thing, which is fatherly love. In short, this movie "selling blood" is a way of expressing oneself at all costs for the sake of one's son.

In addition, this film is a trend that emerged in the Korean film industry to shape traditional Korean fathers, and the film "Xu Sanguan" with this trend as its theme is also a film touted as a warm family. As the first modern novel of Chinese Mainland adapted into Korean drama and Korean film, "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant" has attracted wide attention in China. Overall, the drama "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant" is basically faithful to the original work, and it is difficult to find a strong Korean adaptation. However, the film "Xu Sanguan" has significant differences, including many Korean adaptations. These works have had a significant impact on the history of literary exchange between China and South Korea. Although the film adopts some rewriting methods that have certain limitations in expressing the theme, it clearly plays a crucial role in the situation where "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant" has not yet been made into a film by two countries. At the same time, it also played a certain enlightening role in the dissemination of Chinese literary works in South Korea.

## **5. THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF THE FILM ADAPTATION OF "XU SANGUAN" ON CHINESE FILMS**

In summary, it is gradually becoming clear where China's local film industry should go. The emergence of "Xu Sanguan" is only the first small step for excellent Chinese cultural works to enter the world stage, and now it is necessary to consider how to take a big step towards cultural ideology based on excellent movies.

### ***5.1 Promoting the Transparency of Government Affairs***

The vigorous development of Korean films is closely related to the support of national policies, which has a great enlightening effect on the development of Chinese film and cultural industries. Due to historical reasons, Chinese film and cultural industry cannot develop smoothly like Korean films, but there are still many areas that require Chinese support and improvement.

Firstly, relevant national departments should formulate corresponding film legislation based on the needs of the public, providing more creative opportunities for the public without touching the principles, so that the public can support and promote China's film industry in different ways, and enable China's film industry to develop better.

Secondly, one of the criteria for evaluating a country's cultural soft power is originality and innovation. Currently, the development of most movies in China faces issues such as originality and piracy. The reason for this is that due to the lack of copyright protection and the imperfect legal system in China, some unethical behaviors have the opportunity to seriously suppress the creative enthusiasm of creators. Therefore, it is a must to strengthen the protection of copyright in order to promote the development of our film industry.

### ***5.2 Adhering to the Values of Local Cultural Development***

By leveraging the brand advantages of traditional culture, China is an ancient country with a long history and culture. China has rich and splendid historical and cultural heritage, but the profound cultural heritage has not been fully explored and utilized in the process of "world culture", "entering", and "going abroad".

Film is an art that carries the inheritance of culture. However, with the development of modern Chinese film culture, the Chinese film market has become increasingly restless driven by commercial interests, and box office has become the main criterion for a film's success or failure. Even the term "culture" is difficult to find in films.

At present, mainstream Chinese films lack the inheritance of traditional culture such as the Chinese nation, humanity, and film history, and most of them have evolved into "bubbles". This has led to the insufficient inheritance and development of the local cultural values, and thus lost the favorable conditions for cultivating local cultural brands. Therefore, contemporary Chinese filmmakers must be soberly aware that only by fully showcasing the national characteristics and excellent cultural connotations can Chinese better showcase their vision to the world.

### ***5.3 Paying Attention to the Refinement of Artistic Expression Techniques***

One of the major reasons why Korean cinema has achieved such great development in just over a hundred years is its pursuit of high-quality films and its meticulous requirements for film production. The biggest mistake in Chinese film production is that producers believe that the more money they invest, the better. They only pursue celebrity effect, but neglect the narrative structure and detailed production of the film content.

Therefore, in the current situation, Chinese film production should return to the film itself, attach importance to the fine development of creative methods, and strive to express Chinese concern for the current social reality through emotional authenticity, human care, and humorous expressions. Starting from the fundamental perspective of human culture, it is necessary to perspective the essence of things, and then arouse emotional resonance among the audience. Only in this way can Chinese promote the leapfrog development of our film production level and achieve innovative development in film art.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

China is a close neighbor of South Korea and has a long and profound historical connection with South Korea. In the current sluggish situation of China's film industry, the success of the Korean film industry is undoubtedly a good reference and inspiration for the Chinese film industry. Only by

inheriting and innovating, and finding opportunities for revival and breakthrough, can Chinese culture be promoted internationally, and only then can Chinese make contributions to the film industry. The biggest challenge is how Chinese films can uphold their cultural stance, transform mature realism into traditional Chinese ways, and simultaneously export culture domestically and internationally. Another historic turning point faced by Chinese films is how to break the bottleneck of the future and seek future development. Of course, the complexity involved is also very significant, and it is still very uncertain. How to transform this realistic tradition into the driving force for future development is a question worth pondering. In fact, this issue can only be explained and understood at a deeper level through cultural research on movies.

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