

# The "World Peace" Based on the Gene of Chinese Culture

## --- The Reconstruction of the Historical Image of "Hero"

Zhang Xianxi  
College of Media and Communication  
Zaozhuang University  
Zaozhuang, Shandong, China

**Abstract**—As an outstanding representative of Chinese film directors, Zhang Yimou presents many excellent Chinese cultural genes in his works. These cultural genes not only play an important role in the inheritance of Chinese culture, but also construct the image of the country that director Zhang Yimou understands from different levels. The excellent cultural genes in Zhang Yimou's works not only establish the directing position of Zhang Yimou as a Chinese film master, but also become a distinctive national feature of the Chinese film school. These ethnic characteristics are particularly evident in Zhang Yimou's film "Hero". This film combines Chinese calligraphy and martial arts culture, making it an important carrier of spreading Chinese culture and national image to the world.

**Keywords**—Cultural gene, "Heroes", Calligraphy, chivalrous wushu master, World Peace

As an outstanding representative of Chinese film directors, Zhang Yimou presents many excellent Chinese cultural genes in his works. These cultural genes not only play an important role in the inheritance of Chinese culture, but also construct the image of the country that director Zhang Yimou understands from different levels. The early film "Red Sorghum" and "Raise the red lantern" focused on the construction of national image from the folklore spectacles. "The Story of Qiu Ju", "Not One Less", "my father and mother" focused on reflecting Chinese local human feelings. "Lifetimes Living", "Coming Home", "The Flowers Of War" focus on the national trauma to construct the national image. While "Hero" and "Curse of the Golden Flower" and the "the Great Wall" construct the national image through the reconstruction of historical images.

Looking at director Zhang Yimou's creative system, it is easy to find that almost all of the films of Zhang Yimou have varying degrees of performances of Chinese excellent culture. The excellent cultural genes in Zhang Yimou's works not only establish the directing position of Zhang Yimou as a Chinese film master, but also become a distinctive national feature of the Chinese film school. These ethnic characteristics are particularly evident in Zhang Yimou's film "Hero". This film combines Chinese calligraphy and martial arts culture, making it an important carrier of spreading Chinese culture and national image to the world.

### I. "WORLD PEACE" REALIZED FROM CALLIGRAPHY

Although the proportion of calligraphy images in Zhang Yimou's "Hero" is not large, it plays a crucial role in revealing the theme. The theme of the film can be understood as the expression of "World Peace". This "World Peace" has two levels of significance. Firstly, from a historical point of view, it expresses the Qin King's demands of the reunification of China. Secondly, from the contemporary significance, it expresses Zhang Yimou's expectations for today's world peace. The word "Jian" (means sword in English) can be interpreted in a variety of ways, but each explanation can refer to the meaning of "peace in the world", which is understood by Qin Wang. From the formation of the Chinese character "Jian", "Jian" is the left and right structure. The left side is the character "Hu". In ancient times, the word "Hu" had the meaning of "everything" and "everyone". According to the ancient book of classics, such as "Shujing·Yaodian" and "Chuci·Tianwen", the word "Hu" means everyone, people or the public. The right side of "Jian" means a standing knife. Combining the meaning of the two parts of "Jian", namely, we can get the meaning of the knife that people put down, and it can be understood as the meaning of reconciliation and peace. There are three realms of sword art. The first layer is "man and sword is one, sword is man, man is sword" that sword is a weapon. The second layer is "without sword in hand, sword in heart" is sword as "Sword Ki". The third realm "no sword in hand, no sword in heart" that is to contain everything with great bosom, that is not to kill, which means peace. Therefore, Canjian learned the "World Peace" from the word "sword", and recognize the hero and the mission of caring about the whole world and finally have given up the assassination of the king of Qin when he almost succeed, regardless of the feelings of the Feixue. Though Wuming was filled with hatred and bared the responsibility of the confidant, but he realized the two words of "the world" from the word of "Jian" written by Canjian in the sand. The supreme state of the word "sword" has made Wuming abandoned the trust of his own friends and confidant as "world peace" and finally fulfilled the King of Qin. In the dialogue with Wuming, Qin King's inner doubt and loneliness gradually disappeared. Finally he found the confidant - Wuming, got the meaning of "world peace" from the word "sword" and handed the sword to Wuming and let him make the last choice. The ten years' hatred of Wuming suddenly collapsed. He laid down the hatred of individuals and families, and giving up the assassin for the sake of "World Peace". The story of "Hero" has been criticized by many scholars. For example, Huang Shixian, a professor at Beijing Film Academy, believes that "The two ways of kings and chivalrous men are impossible to achieve historical reconciliation and historical collusion." [1] The triumph of the hero's market and its cultural paradox [J].

contemporary film, 2003 (2): 21.] Zhang Yimou's "Hero" confuses historical evaluation and moral evaluation. This is not only the "hard injury" that deviates from the genre of the martial arts, but "deconstructs the history, deconstructs the heroes, also deconstructs the climax, and deconstructs the audience." The expectation of "Hero" (belonging to the "reverse type" failure) makes the whole movie sad but not strong". It is true that the story of Zhang Yimou's "Hero" is somewhat inconsistent with the historical logic from the history of the Warring States period. But from the creation background and original intention of Zhang Yimou's "Hero", Zhang Yimou's "Hero" is not the repetition of history, but the reconstruction of the history of contemporary people to express the peace of the world. In this sense, Zhang Yimou's "Hero" has an obvious reflection of the modernity and contemporary significance of the modern world.

The world background of the creation of "Hero" is the American hegemonism in the world. "Hero" started in August 11, 2001, and a whole month later the "9. 11" incident had a major impact on the theme of "Hero". It can be said that the "9. 11" incident in the United States changed people's cognition of the whole world, and changed Zhang Yimou's creative ideas, and changed the theme of "Hero" in Zhang's creation. This change has made "Hero" have the contemporaneity of mapping the contemporary world. As Zhang Yimou said in an interview with Xinhua Net, "The opening day of heroes was August 11, 2001, and after a month, everyone in the play was talking about '9. 11', which had a great impact on "Hero". Zhang Yimou decided to elevate the theme of the film to the height of world peace." In order to show that the original story of the Qin Dynasty is not appropriate, Zhang Yimou reconstructed a story of the Qin Dynasty, and fully excavates many Chinese excellent cultural genes to reveal the theme of peace. Chinese character culture is one of them. Zhang Yimou chose the word "Jian" in Chinese characters. Through the forming method, writing method, connotation and historical implication of "Jian", it expresses the profound, diverse tradition and rich connotation of Chinese character culture, and expresses the special emotion of Chinese people to Chinese characters (Such as the old book keeper of Zhao State Library "The Qin State can destroy our country and people, but it can not destroy our words."). The emotion is no less stronger than that of the French people sentiment in French writer Alfonse Daudet's short story "The Last Lesson", which makes the audience deeply feel the expectations to "World Peace" of the people-Canjian, Wuming and Qin King in the play. This expectation is also a strong desire for Zhang Yimou's creative team and people from all over the world.

## II. RETREAT FROM "JIANGHU" AND RETURN TO THE "WORLD"

Many scholars define "Hero" as a swordsman movie. Wang Haizhou, a scholar, thinks that "director Zhang Yimou takes "Hero" into a swordsman film with the Qin Dynasty as the background is a typical choice for the Chinese films to go to the international market under the context of the East and the West. It defines the type of "Hero" as a swordsman film. Although this kind of definition has certain rationality, it has also been universally recognized by the academic community. But it is still open to discuss the definition of "Hero" as a swordsman film. The Chinese swordsman film, as the most oriental feature of China, has its special spirit, which is derived from the chivalrous spirit in the Spring and Autumn Period of China. From the first Chinese swordsman film "Li Feifei" in 1925, to the "Burning Red Lotus Temple" directed by Zhang Shichuan, the Star Film Company in 1928, and then to "Xian" by Taiwan director Hu Jinquan in 1971, to the "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" taken by Ang Lee in 2000, and so on, all inherit the essence of swordsman films - chivalrous spirit. Although Zhang Yimou's "Hero" has the form of swordsman film, but the film lost the core of the martial arts film, at best, can only be called the martial arts film. But this is not to say that Zhang Yimou can not make swordsman films. The shooting of "Hero" is based on Zhang Yimou's judgment on the situation of the world and the Chinese film, the pursuit of the innovation of Chinese films and the conscious choice of the world expression, to make "Hero" a film that spreads Chinese culture and has universal values. The success of "Hero" proves that Zhang Yimou's strategy is correct. With his excellent directing ability and skillful use of color, composition, music and other film elements and understanding of China's extensive and profound culture, Zhang Yimou has offered a fine art for Chinese and the world audience and created a higher and higher model for the foreign audience to understand China. Therefore, Zhang Yimou's "Hero", although weakened the core of the martial arts film, that is, the faded swordsman's "Jiang Hu", but successfully export a "peaceful world", a peace loving ancient China to the world.

This article defines "Hero" as a martial arts film, and it is not a free talk without any basis. This definition is mainly based on the following: (1) from the setting of the assassin in "Hero", the names of the four assassins in "Hero" and Canjian's servants, including the Wuming, Canjian, Feixue, Changkong and Ruyue correspond to five virtues of Confucian culture, "Benevolence, Righteousness, Propriety, Wisdom and Faith". The assassin Wuming's design is the symbol of "Benevolence". Wuming comes from the famous sentence in Chuang-tzu's <Xiaoyaoyou>: "The wiseman is not selfish, the god-man has no achievement, and the sage is infamous. Wuming appears to be a low-born assassin, but a sage and a benevolent person without desire. He had no intention of being in "Jianghu", even more inadvertently to fame, which provided a reasonable explanation for his final abandonment of his family's hatred and his confidant. Although the movie does not clearly show the assassin Changkong's true identity, but it is easy to see from the image that Changkong is the embodiment of "Righteousness". This is mainly manifested in two aspects: Firstly, Changkong is not for a personal vindictive, only to protect the state of Zhao; Secondly, Changkong knows the righteousness of the confidant, and is willing to hand his weapon to Wuming. The assassin Feixue is the symbol of the "Propriety". Feixue is the daughter of Zhao Zhen, the Great General of Zhao State. The father and daughter venged for the king of the state of Zhao and Feixue bore her father's revenge, would rather give up her own love and stick to the propriety. As the most powerful assassin in "Hero", Canjian stayed in the Academy of Calligraphy all day. It is obvious that the role of the director is not only an assassin, but also a thinker and a wise man who can distinguish between right and wrong. As the maidservant of Canjian, Ruyue is loyal to her master, and she can lose life and chastity for her master. In a word, the five personal identities in "Hero" are set in accordance with the spirit of Confucianism, not according to the rules of "Jianghu", which means that the five people, although they are the master of martial world, have no intention of being in

“Jianghu”, adhering to the Confucian spirit of “entering the society”, which is a good note to the five people’s self-sacrifice for the sake of the world peace.

From the plot of “Hero”, the director did not let the story take place outside the temple, but let the story take place in the Qin Wang palace, which was closed for a long time. Through the dialogue between the Qin King and Wuming, the two most impossible communicators of the assassin and the King of Qin, the psychic communication is realized. Whether or not the four stories in the film are true or not, their stories are far away from the Chinese swordsman spirit, far away from the word of martial arts, and the final outcome is converted to the peace of the world. From the beginning of the film, the king of Qin called Wuming, to the end Wuming grandly buried by King of Qin, and other plots such as Canjian accidentally killed by Feixue, and Feixue committed suicide for love, the narrative tone of the whole film is not closely related to the martial word, and there is no distinctive chivalrous spiritual kernel of the swordsman film. The background of the story told by Wuming in the film occurred in the Chess Hall in Langmeng and the City Library in Jingcheng, where Chinese chess and books are the place of traditional Chinese static culture, not the martial arts world or martial arts hall of the chivalrous story. Obviously, Zhang Yimou’s arrangement is to explain that: 1 “Hero” is not a chivalrous story at all; 2. Hero still inherits the tradition that Zhang Yimou is good at presenting the wonders of the Chinese nation; 3. the film is to reveal the theme of "peace in the world". From the story itself, the story of Wuming is a story that a Qin's assassin who cleverly used the triangle love between the three Zhao assassins and beat them one by one. This is a faithful story. In the story, Qin's assassin Wuming killed Zhao's assassin as the loyalty of the people of the state of Qin. Although there was an emotional entanglement between the assassins, there was a lack of chivalrous spirit, which could not be defined as a chivalrous story on the whole. The second story is told from the view of King of Qin, in which the assassins sacrificed their weapons and lives for the common purpose of assassinating Qin. Although this story is a story about the integrity of “Jianghu”, there are fewer chivalrous spirits in the story. The third story is about a story of enlightenment. In the story, the "world peace" was realized by Canjian when assassinating Qin. Qin King found the confidant through the story of Wuming, and realized the highest state of "sword"--- “World Peace”. Through the two words of "world peace" bestowed by Canjian and the highest state of "sword" told by King of Qin, Wuming finally reached the highest state of "sword"--- "no killing". Superfacially, the three stories talk about "faith", "loyalty" and "enlightenment", but the connection of three stories is to tell the story how Wuming get close to the Qin King step by step with the Qin King's decrees and psychological tactics, but does not finish the assassination mission, which is the fourth story of this film. The story seems to be a story of chivalrous spirit, but the reversal of the end makes the story lose its chivalrous spirit and its moral integrity subsided. Therefore, as a whole, the four stories, without the chivalrous spirit of the Chinese chivalrous films, the brotherhood of the chivalrous films, are all integrated in the expression of the contemporary appeal of "world peace". the brotherhood of the chivalrous films. So the assassins in the film Wuming, Canjian, gived up the assassination and converted to "world peace".

"Hero", with the help of Chinese calligraphy and martial arts culture, conveys the appeal of peace to the audience, making it a successful commercial blockbuster and reaping the double harvest of domestic and foreign box offices. This success is undoubtedly a successful example of director Zhang Yimou's implantation of excellent Chinese genes into films to reconstruct historical images. He not only exported the beautiful oriental image to the world, but also spread the Chinese culture behind the image to the world, and provided a classic model for the Chinese film to go out of the country.

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