

Cultural Hybridization in the Third Space under Dispersed Literature

-- Analysis of the Image of Hua Mulan in Maxine Hong Kingston's The Warrior Woman

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Abstract

In today's globalization trend, cultural exchange and integration has become a hot topic. This study mainly applies Homi Bhabha's theory of "third space" to analyze the image of Hua Mulan in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Warrior Woman* and explore the phenomenon of cultural hybridization in the third space under the dispersed literature. This cultural hybridization is reflected in the multiplicity of Hua Mulan's image, which is not only a classic hero image in traditional Chinese culture, but also influenced by Western feminist thought to a certain extent. We can get a greater understanding of the significance of diasporic literature in cross-cultural dialogue, as well as the new obstacles that cultural hybridization poses to literary creativity.

Keywords

Maxine Hong Kingston; The Woman Warrior; Theory of "third space"; Identification.

1. Introduction

Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Warrior Woman*, portraying Hua Mulan, demonstrates cultural hybridization in the third space through stray literature. In this process, the image of Hua Mulan is deeply analyzed. In *Warrior Woman*, the image of Hua Mulan is different from that in the traditional story. Maxine Hong Kingston's psychological representation of Hua Mulan illustrates her struggle and thinking in the third space as a woman. In the process, the image of Hua Mulan is not only a warrior, but also a woman with her own thinking and judgment. She is both a female warrior in traditional Chinese stories and a character with a modern sense of femininity, while at the same time demonstrating Chinese Americans' identification with and reflection on traditional Chinese culture and modern Western culture. This phenomenon of cultural hybridization reflects Maxine Hong Kingston's concern and exploration of multiculturalism, as well as the complexity of Chinese Americans' identity.

This study aims to deeply explore the phenomenon of cultural hybridization in the third space under dispersed literature by analyzing the image of Hua Mulan, and it also hopes to provide readers with a new perspective to re-examine and understand Maxine Hong Kingston's novel *Warrior Woman* in terms of the mingling and clash of Chinese and Western cultures, which provides readers from different cultural backgrounds with a space for resonance and reflection. In her art, Maxine Hong Kingston states "I am here, I am both." The concept of cultural hybridization and symbiosis drives us to consider how to preserve and pass on cultural diversity in an era of globalization.

2. Dispersed Literature and Third Space Theory

2.1. Characteristics of Dispersed Literature

The word "diaspora" is also translated as "dispersion" or "displacement", and the study of this phenomenon is called "diaspora research". The study of this phenomenon has come to be known as "diaspora studies". Although the study of diasporic writing or the phenomenon of diaspora began with postcolonial studies in the early 1990s, due to the increasing new waves of migration that accompany the phenomenon of diaspora, the study of diaspora and the study of diasporic literature has become another popular topic in postcolonial and cultural studies in the era of globalization. Undoubtedly, within this broad framework, diasporic writing is a unique literary phenomenon in the age of globalization. When we read the pieces of diasporic writers, we can sense their indescribable ambivalence: on the one hand, they are displeased or even angry of some features of their homeland and envision to find spiritual support in another land. On the other hand, because the cultural foundation of their own country or nation is hard to be shaken, it is very difficult for them to fully integrate with the culture and social customs of their own country, and therefore they have to integrate with the culture and social customs of their own country, and therefore they have to live with the culture and social customs of their country. On the other hand, due to the difficulty of shaking the cultural roots of their own country or nation, it is difficult for them to fully integrate with the culture and social customs of the nation-state in which they live, and therefore they have to summon out those memories buried deep in their hearts and minds in the midst of their pains and make them wander between the lines of their works. As a result of this unique experience, these writers tend to write works that are free from the fixed traditional patterns of their own nation, while at the same time lingering on these cultural memories. Therefore, the depictions in their works are often a kind of "third experience" with mixed components. The characteristics of this third experience reflect the cultural diversity brought about by cultural globalization, which is worth studying from the perspective of cross-cultural theory.

2.2. Third Space Theory

The direct source of the concept of "third space" is the Marxist theorist H. Lefebvre. This lifelong wandering intellectual had a prophetic understanding of the spatial, historical, and social nature of human existence, and created a set of research methods that cut through the complexity of the modern world, grasping the dialectics of everyday life and spatial production from an interdisciplinary standpoint. [1]

The theoretical resources for the concept of "third space" come mainly from Foucault. Whereas Lefebvre positively capitalized on the Other and proposed the difference of space, Foucault inscribed the "space of the Other" in his writings, which has long been unnoticed.

In the process of repositioning race, time and modernity, Homi K. Bhabha also focuses on the concept of "third space". His strategy is to place himself at the boundaries of difference by turning his back on cultural difference. From the writing of cultural difference, Bhabha draws out hybridity and places it in the "paradigm of thirthing as otherness." Bhabha also focuses on the concept of "third space." [1]

In this way, hybridity constructs a "third space" that resists essentialism, deconstructs cultural imperialism, and challenges the monolithic discourse of modernity. By immersing ourselves in the research of "third space," we might avoid extremist politics and show the postcolonial world as one of vulnerable voices.

The rapid emergence of modern feminism has not only broadened the investigation of the composition of spatial difference, but it has also increased the openness of the "third space". Feminism is not a pure theory; it is often embodied in the practices of women cultural critics, who break into the spatial realm of race, class, and gender, imagining and opening up spaces of

difference, and thus bluntly transposing their "creative spatial imaginaries" into the postmodern cultural politics of resistance. The Women Warriors.

3. Analysis of the Image of Hua Mulan in the Soup Version of The Warrior Woman

Hua Mulan is not just a heroic female warrior in this work, but also a daughter who bears the great burden of her family. She is a typical traditional Chinese woman who takes up her family's purpose and valiantly goes into combat to preserve her family and defend her nation. This reflects the ancient Chinese society's esteem for female virtues, such as filial piety, loyalty, and bravery. However, after the war is over, Hua Mulan returns to her female identity and shows her desire for family life, which reflects the importance of women in family life. At the same time, the image of Hua Mulan has a western feminist color. She bravely challenges the traditional gender concepts and goes into battle as a woman, showing the courage and wisdom of women that is not inferior to men. This affirmation of women's ability coincides with the concept of Western feminism. Finally, the figure of Hua Mulan in Warrior Woman demonstrates a complex cultural hybridization in the setting of widely diffused literature.

4. Analysis of the Cultural Hybridity of the Soup Version of Hua Mulan in The Female Warrior

4.1. The Background of the Creation of The Female Warrior

Maxine Hong Kingston's creative background is deeply influenced by her identity and cultural background. She was born in China and later immigrated to the United States, where she lived and grew up in two very different cultures. Her works reflect her thoughts and exploration of cultural hybridization and identity. In Warrior Woman, the image of Hua Mulan is not only a hero in a traditional Chinese story, but also a female figure with a global perspective, which demonstrates Tang's thoughts on cultural plurality and female identity. In The Warrior Woman, Hua Mulan becomes a brave, intelligent female figure with the ability to think independently, and she shows no less courageous than men in war. The text gives an in-depth investigation of the cultural hybridization of the third space through the narrative of Hua Mulan, demonstrating the complex meaning of female representations in diverse cultural backgrounds. We may better comprehend the distinctive function of distributed literature in the formation of cultural hybridization in the third space by evaluating the image of Hua Mulan.

4.2. Integration of Chinese and Western cultural elements

In the work, it is depicted that when Hua Mulan was suffering from hunger in the deep mountains, she met a rabbit, "The rabbit looked very alert, it looked at me keenly, and jumped step by step toward the fire It turned its face toward me, and then jumped into the fireI saw that the rabbit had turned into rabbit meat, yellow-orange and just delicious. I ate the meat and realized in my heart that the rabbit had made a self-sacrifice for me"[2] The author's inspiration for adding the image of the rabbit came from the episode of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, "As she ran she noticed a white rabbit jumping over, and the Red Princess made her run so fast that the white rabbit had to keep up, and it was late." [2] In an interview, Maxine Hong Kingston stated "In Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, the rabbit is not eaten, and I'm confusing the Eastern and Western stories because I feel that this kind of confusion often occurs in the minds of children, in the minds of Chinese American children." The rabbit imagery comes from Western mythology, but the episode in which it sacrifices itself by jumping into the fire comes from Eastern lore. In the Buddhist story, when the Bodhisattva Maitreya was on his way to become a monk, he was caught in a downpour of rain and was unable to go out to take his mantle, and the white rabbit in the forest, seeing that the immortal had not eaten for seven days,

voluntarily threw himself into the fire and burned his body to make offerings.[3] Obviously, the rabbit's act of sacrificing himself and giving to others in the text is taken from Eastern Buddhist teachings. The crossover between Chinese and Western cultures provides the author with creative inspiration and creates a brand new space, in which the author creates a story that borrows the outline of the material from his homeland but fills it with Western elements, which is not only interconnected with the two cultures but is also different from the two cultures and bears the distinctive cultural imprints of the Chinese Americans.

4.3. Collision of traditional and modern values

In the collision of traditional and modern values, Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Warrior Woman* shows a diffuse literary style with a mixture of cultures. The image of Hua Mulan in the novel is a typical representative of this cultural mixture. On the one hand, Hua Mulan adheres to traditional Chinese women's gentleness, tenderness and filial piety, and on the other hand, she also demonstrates modern women's independence, autonomy and strength. This mixture of cultures reflects the author's exploration and fusion of different cultural values, and also provides new ideas for the portrayal of contemporary women. The hero Guan Gong, "Li Sao" and other traditional Chinese stories, characters and literary works are rewritten and reconstructed, and at the same time reinterpreted in the light of their own life experiences. [4] In contemporary society, the collision between traditional and modern values still exists. How to find one's own position in the cultural mingling, Maxine Hong Kingston's novel "*The Warrior Woman*" as well as the image of Hua Mulan provide us with a useful way of thinking.

4.4. Cultural Identity and Identity Construction

Cultural identity refers to the degree of recognition and acceptance of one's own cultural environment, cultural traditions, and cultural values. In dispersed literature, cultural identity is an important theme, especially when describing the exchange and integration between different cultures. The illustration of Hua Mulan in Maxine Hong Kingston's novel *The Warrior Woman* depicts cultural hybridization in the third space. In the novel, the picture of Hua Mulan is highly influenced by Chinese culture, yet her tale is told in fragments. Her family and identity are always shifting, and her capacity to adapt and thrive in many cultural settings exhibits tolerance and knowledge of other cultures. This cross-cultural identity is mirrored not just in Hua Mulan's picture, but also in Maxine Hong Kingston's book writing. Her works often focus on the exchanges and conflicts between different cultures and explore the complexity of cultural identity. The novel *The Warrior Woman* by Maxine Hong Kingston depicts cultural hybridization in the third space through the investigation of Hua Mulan's image, providing a vivid scenario for us to consider cultural identity.

4.5. Exploring Female Self-consciousness

In Maxine Hong Kingston's novel *The Warrior Woman*, the image of Hua Mulan presents a unique cultural hybridization. By depicting the figure of Hua Mulan in the setting of distributed literature, the author displays women's self-consciousness in numerous cultural situations. We can observe the struggle and progress that women go through when faced with family, country, and self-worth by evaluating the depiction of Hua Mulan. This is precisely the charm of cultural hybridization in the third space, which makes us pay more attention to the inner world of women under the impact of multiculturalism and how they find their own position in the exploration of self-consciousness. This kind of cultural hybridization not only deepens the meaning of diasporic literature, but it also offers us with a significant viewpoint on the evolution of women's self-consciousness.

4.6. Presenting a Multicultural Landscape

In Maxine Hong Kingston's novel *The Warrior Woman*, the image of Hua Mulan presents a multicultural hybridization. First of all, as a famous heroine in ancient China, Hua Mulan's image itself is characterized by strong national culture. However, in Maxine Hong Kingston's writing, the image of Hua Mulan does not completely follow the tradition, but incorporates the independent spirit of modern women. This symbolizes not just the author's challenge to the traditional image of women, but also the change of women's images under multiculturalism. Furthermore, *The Warrior Woman*'s narrative is set during the North and South Dynasties, an era marked by many civilizations. Against the backdrop of war, political turmoil and ethnic mingling, different cultural concepts intertwine and influence. Through the image of Hua Mulan, Maxine Hong Kingston demonstrates the characteristics of multicultural intermingling in this period. Her depiction of Hua Mulan as a strong, independent woman reflects the understanding and expectations of women under the influence of multiculturalism. Maxine Hong Kingston depicts the cultural fusion of the third space under dispersed literature in her portrayal of Hua Mulan in *The Warrior Woman*. She blends traditional and modern, oriental and western cultural elements together, presenting us with a unique female image. This blending of cultures not only broadens the meaning of literary works but also gives readers a greater opportunity to contemplate.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Reflections on the cultural hybridization of the third space under dispersed literature

In Maxine Hong Kingston's novel *The Warrior Woman*, the image of Hua Mulan has distinctive characteristics of dispersed literature. The author combines imagination and substitutes herself into the role of Hua Mulan, giving herself expectations for life and social development, showing the close connection between dispersive literature and the third space, and expressing the conflict and confusion brought by coping with different cultural backgrounds. How to find one's place in a multicultural context and how to realize dialogue and integration across other cultures is precisely the subject of concern in stray writing. Hua Mulan is reinterpreted and reshaped in Maxine Hong Kingston's novel *The Warrior Woman* as a contemporary woman with a strong sense of femininity who defends her family and nation while opposing social pressures that oppress and limit women. This reinterpretation and molding explores the transformation and change of traditional culture in modern society, as well as the exchange and integration between different cultures, and also reflects the author's inheritance and innovation of traditional culture. At the same time, she also uses this image to express her thoughts and concerns about women's rights and status. This innovation of traditional culture not only enriches our knowledge and understanding of traditional culture, but also provides new ideas and references for contemporary literary creation.

5.2. Prospects for Related Research

We can investigate the phenomena of cultural hybridization in the third space in the context of distributed literature in future study. We may examine the intricacy of the portrayal of Hua Mulan in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Warrior Woman* as well as its cultural significance in modern society through the blending and clashing of many cultural aspects. We may investigate how distributed literature might create a cultural image with distinctive charms against the backdrop of multicultural fusion by examining Maxine Hong Kingston's rewrite of Hua Mulan's image. The study of literature in the third space will have a stronger theoretical foundation if we extend this research approach to additional works of distributed literature.

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