

A Psychological Study of Chinese Audience Reception of The Cross-Cultural Film *Everything Everywhere All at Once*: Why Cultural and Communication Adaptation Fail?

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ABSTRACT

In most movies, the "imaginary audience" is already hidden in the structure at the beginning of the creation, and the acceptance of the audience means the finalization of the movie art. The overall purpose of this paper is to explore the audience's acceptance of the cross-cultural movie *Everything Everywhere All at Once* based on cultural adaptation theory and communication adaptation theory. We have to cautiously reflect on whether the ecology of the movie market is undergoing restructuring nowadays, and whether the audience's receptive psychology is changing. Is there a change in the audience's receptive psychology? How can social, psychological, and cultural issues be properly internalized into the core expression of a film? This study collects more than 200,000 words of textual materials from mainstream media channels such as Douban.com, B-station, and Time.com for qualitative research, and utilizes the rooted theory approach to explore the psychological behavioral mechanism of audience's acceptance of cross-cultural films represented by *Everything Everywhere All at Once* and to construct a theoretical model of the psychology of acceptance in a cross-cultural context. It is found that cultural adaptation and communication adaptation theories have once again emphasized their complex structure and new discourse field in the new cross-cultural movie reception situation. This study expands the applicability of these two theories in the new socio-cultural context of China.

KEYWORDS

Cross-Cultural Film; Psychology of Reception; Acculturation; *Everything Everywhere All at Once*

INTRODUCTION

In March 2023, *Everything Everywhere All at Once* won seven awards at the 95th Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Original Screenplay, in a crushing victory. As of March 18, 2023, it has a 7.6 rating and 195,632 reviews on Douban.com in China, a 94% fresh rating on Rotten Tomatoes, and a 7.9 rating on IMDb. This film about a

multiverse, Asian families, and intergenerational relationships was met with skepticism and criticism at the beginning of its release, and it uniquely integrates "Asian", "female", "mother", "middle age", "ordinary" and "heroic" elements, creating an ordinary but great "mother" image in the traditional American heroism, which is different from the perception of "mother" as a family role in East Asia, especially in China. This is in line with East Asian, especially Chinese, perceptions of "mother" as a family role at a superficial cultural level, but in terms of emotional realism, it suffers from an acculturation derailment, which is followed by discussions and reflections on Eastern and Western educational issues, intergenerational values, and East Asian family relations.

In *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, Evelyn, a 55-year-old Chinese-American immigrant whose real-life family and career are in turmoil, is an ordinary, ordinary mother exhausted by life who transforms into a "hero" in an alternate universe, experiencing multiple universes to This ordinary, ordinary mother is transformed into a "hero" in an alternate universe, going through multiple universes, defeating evil, saving the world, and rescuing her daughter and family. "The question of the family in East Asia is a lifelong issue for East Asians and a central expression in the film, but the answer to this question is also the main reason for the criticism of the film. The Chinese audience's interpretation of *Everything Everywhere All at Once* seems to be very different from the director's initial vision. Why is it that a film based on the theme of East Asian family relationships has a natural advantage in terms of psychological acceptance for East Asian audiences, while Chinese audiences have a negative attitude towards the chicken-and-egg conflicts of East Asian families in a superficial sense?

Cross-cultural films for the global market have very obvious cross-cultural characteristics in the production, operation, and dissemination process. Cultural commonality, cultural integration elements, cultural heterogeneity elements as well as cultural adaptability and dissemination adaptability in film texts are important factors influencing the entry of cross-cultural films into other countries' markets, and driven by cultural psychological motives, Chinese audiences' acceptance psychology of cross-cultural films also has a regional cultural(Lu,2022;Sania Widyastira JP,2023;WANG,2022). In the psychological structure of accepting film artworks, the audience will, on the one hand, figure out, unify and assimilate a work according to the aesthetic stereotypes formed under the unique social culture, and at the same time, they will take the initiative to accept new things and information because of the novelty in the aesthetic psychology, internalize and adjust the original psychological mechanism, thus forming the "aesthetic expectation horizon" in the acceptance aesthetics This leads to the formation of an "aesthetic expectation horizon" in receptive aesthetics(Chang,2010).

Although films are usually shot in reality, they use a non-real, non-everyday narrative to construct a story expression space to accommodate the creator's thoughts and perceptions(XL,2021). Many excellent intercultural films often draw cultural nutrients from their nationality to form their initial creative stance and socio-cultural context, and then obtain universal subject identification and cultural identity from the expression of aesthetic commonality and universal values in humanistic thought to achieve intercultural empathy(ZHU,2011).In the intercultural communication of film, the audience's imagination,

interpretation, and reconstruction of the cultural symbols of the film, and the audience's acceptance only mean the completion of the film art(Koenig-Woodyard,1999). Cross-cultural films have a large number of elements of cultural heterogeneity in production, which are generally considered to be two or more cultures with different cultural traits and cultural connotations. In a study of the impact of cultural distance on the box office of East Asian films in the European market, Xiaoyan Wang found that cultural distance hurts foreign box offices. Cultural specificity can be used as an important marketing tool in the film trade for cross-cultural communication(Wang, Pan, Zhu, & Cai,2021). Due to the objective cultural structure differences and audience psychological structure differences, audiences are prone to misunderstanding, cultural misinterpretation, and cultural discounting of cross-culturally transmitted films in different socio-cultural contexts(Croucher, Sommier, & Rahmani,2015). The audience's content-dependent psychological bias and the "cultural adaptability" of mental representations are important processes that affect cultural communication(Henrich, Boyd, & Richerson,2008).

Acculturation is a phenomenon in which individuals from different cultural backgrounds, through cultural contact, bring cultural influence to each other or both parties or bring about a change in their original cultural patterns(Jin,2010). Spiro, a psychological anthropologist, argues that factors such as social mobility, family values, and personality all contribute to acculturation(Spiro,1995). John Berry proposed a model of cross-acculturation, arguing that acculturation is not a one-way influence process and that the acculturation and the society of the host country are two independent dimensions of each other (Berry,1990). He classifies the different attitudes of the acculturation toward the cultural encounters that occur during the cultural exchange as "integration-assimilation-separation-marginalization" (Berry,1990a). The acculturation in the integration mode perceive the lowest acculturation pressure(Berry,1990b).Most of the current research on acculturation has focused on the psychology of acculturation in immigrant and international student populations(Luque,2006; Mao, Li, Xu, & Chi,2020;Wu & Liu,2022), and the adaptive science of acculturation, and the theoretical models and hypotheses that drive the most salient measures of acculturation (Bornstein,2017; Cabassa,2003). Only a small number of journals have applied this theory to cross-cultural consumption scenarios of cultural products, Kizgin, H et al. 2018 investigated the impact of acculturation attitudes and behaviors on the consumption of cultural and entertainment products of choice, advancing the scope of application of the theory in a managerial sense (Kizgin, Jamal, & Richard,2017).2022, a few researchers in Chinese academia have also shifted the focus of acculturation to the cross-cultural communication behavior of film and television productions(Yani,2022). No research hotspots have been formed, and overall, previous studies have ignored the value and role of acculturation attitudes and psychology in predicting their consumption choices in the life domain.

Communication Adaptation Theory (CAT), also known as "communicative adjustment", is a classic theory in linguistics and is often used in the study of interpersonal communication. In 1987, Howard Giles revised his theory of speech adaptation and renamed it "communication adaptation theory", expanding its capacity and integrating it with cross-cultural communication(Baumeister,1982;Giles, Mulac, Bradac, & Johnson,1987), and

combining it with cross-cultural communication(Johnson,1987), the theory has been expanded and combined with cross-cultural communication to produce a variety of models(Bourhis & Giles,1994;Sik,2007). The three manifestations of communicative adaptation are "assimilation," "alienation," and "maintenance," with "alienation" usually occurring in cross-cultural groups. As a theoretical framework that can be used to explain the adaptive communication of communication subjects and objects, CAT has been applied across different disciplines and in different social groups and domains(Liqun, Jingzhong, & Weihan,2020).In the era of important changes in digitalization and intelligent scenario, film, as a linguistic expression with strong cultural ties, assumes a more important mission. As films spread across various cultural backgrounds around the world, "cultural acceptance," "cultural integration," "cultural discounting," etc. may occur depending on the acceptance level of the target audience. "Cultural shock" and other problems, there is still a large research gap in the theoretical promotion and application of this context in the whole academic field.

This study will mainly answer the following questions:

Q1: Why did the cross-cultural film *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, which takes East Asian family relationships as its core of expression, experience "cultural maladjustment" and "communication maladjustment" in China?

Q2: Does the psycho-behavioral mechanism of Chinese audiences' reception reflect a certain change in the psychological structure of Chinese society?

Q3: What does the "cultural maladjustment" of *Everything Everywhere All at Once* reveal to the production and reception sides of cross-cultural film distribution?

RESEARCH METHODS

First, the study needed to dig deeper into the highly relevant textual data, therefore, we adopt a non-prejudiced, bottom-up inductive approach to coding, classifying, and abstracting the concepts of text generation to form theoretical clues to the problem.

Second, fewer studies use the perspective of acculturation to explore the psychology of intercultural film reception, which is a rather important influencing factor in the process of intercultural film transmission. Therefore, it is necessary to summarize the theoretical model of reception psychology in cross-cultural contexts from specific cases. Root theory is suitable for refining theoretical contents and generating theoretical models, and is suitable for exploring the questions raised in this study. The study uses the qualitative analysis tool Nvivo12 for coding and technical analysis of textual data, using the procedural grounded theory proposed by Strauss and Juliet-Corbin based on positivism, which has been widely used in qualitative research in recent years(Radford,2008;Smit,2007;Timmermans & Tavory,2012).

The research data for this study has four components.Douban.com is currently the most authoritative UGC film content production website in China, where users can generate film reviews and rate the films. Considering that viewers mainly learn about and watch *Everything Everywhere All at Once* through online streaming platforms and rely more on word-of-mouth communication. Therefore, the study includes the content of viewer comments under the up-rated videos of Bilibili as part of the data sample. bilibili is a cultural

community and video platform with a high concentration of young generations in China, and one study has done a differential analysis of user interaction behavior across different short video platforms, and the results show that Bilibili users are factual discussion types, with more emphasis on deep user engagement(Yue & Yuxin,2023).In addition, compared with Douban.com and B-site, which tend to be more youthful and popular film reviews, Time.com resident reviewers are more professional, and a significant portion of them are professional film reviewers. Therefore, film reviews on Time.com were also included in the sample as part of the data at the same time.

Based on the research question and the research object of this study, the study tracked and browsed the reviews related to *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, and used crawler software to collect short reviews and film reviews of *Everything Everywhere All at Once* from Douban.com, B Station, and Time.com, obtaining a total of more than 84,000 texts. In total, more than 84,000 words were obtained.

In addition, to supplement the lack of primary data, the study conducted semi-structured interviews through questionnaires. In the first part of the questionnaire, we had a preliminary understanding of the basic information of the respondents, and in the second part we invited them to evaluate the content of *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, and at the same time, we also surveyed for the audience's evaluation and attitude towards cross-cultural films as a whole. 200 valid data, totaling more than 120,000 words, were finally recovered, and all the textual data totaled more than 200,000 words.The table of data sources is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Table of Data Sources

Data source	Sample Type	Sample size	Word Count
Douban.com	Long Film Reviews	205articles	39359
	Short Comments	815items	21420
Bilibili video site	Comments	765items	5421
Time.com	Professional long film reviews	36articles	18762
Questionnaire data	Two open-ended questions	200answers	124947

Of the 200 respondents, there was a roughly even gender distribution. The vast majority of viewers are under 40 years old and have received higher education. The occupational distribution of the audience is relatively even, with the proportion of students, state-owned enterprises, institutions, civil servants, private enterprises, and foreign-funded enterprises, and the information of the audience meets the type requirements of this research.

In addition, we did preliminary research on the respondents' film-watching preferences, and the majority of the 200 respondents liked to watch comedy films, science fiction films, and suspense films.

Research Process

Procedural coding requires three steps: open coding, spindle coding, and selective coding. In the open coding stage, the researcher reads and repeatedly screens the collected text data one by one and constructs the first-level codes.

To ensure the credibility and validity of the coding, the two researchers pre-established relative rules before the coding began, and during the formal coding process, the initial categories were first coded independently by two people, and then the subsequent categories were refined by joint discussion. After the coding was completed, the study conducted a theoretical saturation test, using the reserved 200 text data to code and compare them, and the new data could no longer generate new categories, and no new causal or other logical relationships were generated between the categories, proving that the categories in this study had reached theoretical saturation.

Open Coding Procedure

In this process, a total of 126 first-level codes were obtained, and the first-level codes were summarized and analyzed to generate 12 initial categories, and some of the coding results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Open Coding

Initial Category	Original records
Plot content	"The setting, the story and the presentation blend so rounded, and even several times let me teary-eyed not have time to collect while then need to burst out laughing more than, wandering in the serious and nonsense between the thin line can also play so fancy, really is how to praise is not too much." "Most like the stone paragraph, absurd and vain, feel that is what the screenwriter really want to say."
Technical Expression	"The nonsensical transitions between scenes are dizzying, and you may not be able to keep up with the adventures of the protagonists between such a multiverse in the fast food era, and the editing montage is simply perfect." "Those showy clips, vaudeville-like action scenes, are like poor quality ice cream, seemingly aromatic, but cheap in taste and no aftertaste."
Visual effect	"A paragraph of creative visual metaphors" "There are tons of visual wonders"
Character setting	"What's most interesting is that the main character 'Xiulian' stands almost entirely in opposition to Michelle Yeoh herself, and as a result, when 'Michelle Yeoh' herself appears, the main character seems to become an 'objectified' presence."

Film Worldview	<p>"The family eats, drinks and sleeps is the mother Xiulian in charge, both to busy family affairs, but also to take care of the business of the laundry. Stealthy pretending to be a good person's father will only point his finger and say to: Be kind"</p> <p>"East Asian affinities are far more complex than the fancy shuttle in the films, and applying the meta-universe concept just gives birth to a new era of traffic codes. "</p>
Actor Charm	<p>"Michelle Yeoh is a real bully"</p> <p>"What makes the actress so brilliant?"</p>
Comments on the director	<p>"Under the shell of the parallel universe, wrapped in the soft core of the mother rescuing her daughter and the reconciliation of the affection of the three generations of grandchildren. "</p> <p>"Turned down the two directors' previous works, and the Swiss Army Knife Man" tastes the same."</p> <p>"The director's talent is visible to the naked eye almost overflowing the screen."</p>
Compromise understanding	<p>"She could have gone anywhere and done anything to be anyone, but she chose to be your mom. Maybe that's the point of the film that struck me the most."</p> <p>"I know that "all parents are wretched" is the reality of the East Asian family, but when I'm a lone rock in some universe, I wish my mom was around."</p> <p>"I would have cried if it hadn't ended this way, after all, everyone is eager to love and be loved."</p>
Emotional harm	<p>"Let the feminine souls spare each other, without having to be bound to be mother and daughter in a thousand times and in a thousand lifetimes."</p> <p>"The magnitude of this pain, the number of hallucinations it gives, the unhealable wounds, I experienced."</p>
Weak communication behavior	<p>"Word of mouth is high and low, and there is even less desire to express it after watching it."</p>
Strong communication behavior	<p>"Will recommend friends to watch it together!!!"</p>

Axial Coding Procedure

The axial coding stage requires further localization of the initial categories to generate more clearly directed and conceptual primary categories(Corbin J,2008). We summarized and generated 5 main categories and 13 secondary categories, which are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Axiality Coding Categories

Main Category	Coding percentage	Secondary Category	Connotation
Film Text Expression	30%	Plot content	The main plot setting and content of the film is presented.
		Character Setting	The characteristics and identity of the characters in the film.
		Film Worldview	The meta-setting of the film, the story space in which it is set, the multiverse, the end of the world, etc.
Film technology effect	20%	Theme Core	The theme and value core expressed by the film.
		Technical Expression	The film uses scene transitions, editing methods, etc.
		Visual effect	The film's camera presentation, visual metaphors, etc.
Film Staffing	5%	Actor Charm	Actors' acting skills and personal charisma, etc.
		Comments on the director	The director's previous works and shooting habits, etc.
		Emotional identification	Feel identification, satisfaction, and empathy with the overall viewing experience or the expression of the film's thematic core.
Emotional Reception	40%	Compromise understanding	Don't agree or feel satisfied with the overall feeling or the expression of the theme of the film, but can understand it rationally.
		Emotional harm	Feel very dissatisfied with the overall feeling of the film or the expression of the theme of the film, and even caused some degree of emotional harm to oneself.
Behavioral Tendency	5%	Weak communication behavior	Reluctance to talk about or distribute the film.
		Strong communication behavior	Wants to talk and share with people and actively spread information about the film.

Selective Coding Procedure

Selective coding is the analysis of the main category to further refine the core category and clarify the logical line between the initial category, the main category, and the core category. In the whole study, the audience's acceptance attitude and acceptance psychology are our

main points, and the audience's emotional acceptance runs through the whole study, and the audience's perception of the film's textual expression, technical effects, and staffing is the basis for forming emotional acceptance, which further points to the audience's behavioral tendency and finally points to the three dimensions of "film text perception -Emotional acceptance-behavioral tendency".

According to the results of the data analysis, "cultural identity" and "cultural barriers" are the two poles in the acceptance psychology of *Everything Everywhere All at Once* in terms of text, technology, people's expression, and perception. Viewers with a strong sense of identity believe that the conflicting content of mother Evelyn and daughter Joy is very much in line with the current situation of some East Asian families, allowing them to feel a sense of immersion and empathy. More viewers were dissatisfied with the "forced reconciliation" ending, considering it a kind of compromise and forced forgiveness, and those who expressed their emotions more intensely felt that the film had caused them a bad emotional experience, and even suffered emotional damage. In the middle of these two acceptance emotions, there is also the compromise and understanding the emotion of "I don't like the ending, but I can understand it because that's how life is". At the same time, viewers' emotions influence their social and social interaction behaviors, and their behavioral tendencies can be divided into weak and strong communication behaviors according to their emotional tendencies. Accordingly, we constructed a "psychological model of acceptance in cross-cultural contexts", which is shown in Figure 1.

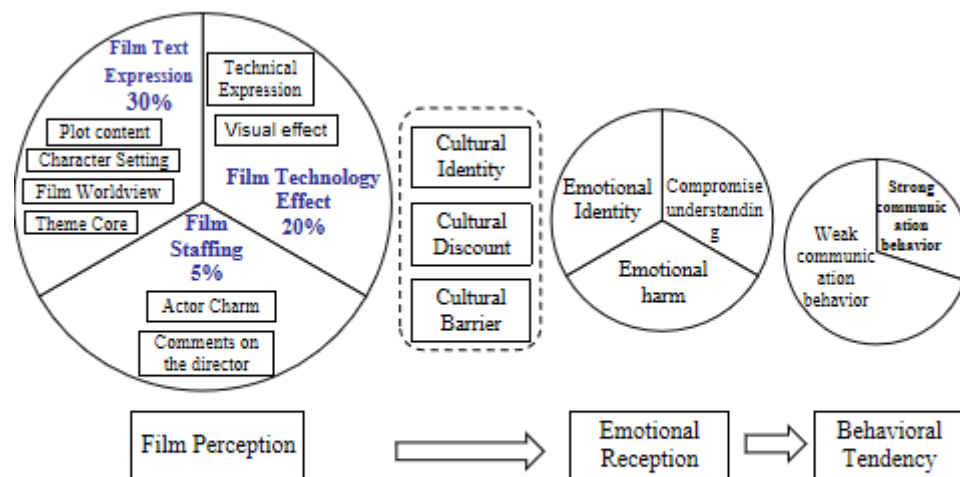


Figure 1. Psychological model of acceptance in a cross-cultural context

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Since the 21st century, a strong wave of globalization has swept through every country in the world, and countries have become more closely connected, affecting every aspect of the

country and society. Since its birth, cinema has had both "cultural value" and "economic value", and in the process of dissemination and evolution, new phenomena and issues such as social, economic, cultural, psychological, media, and communication have emerged. In the process of transnational dissemination, cinema is constantly changing its original appearance, and at the same time generating new phenomena and problems in social, economic, cultural, psychological, media, and communication. The disruptive changes in digital technology have brought revolutionary changes to the content and format of cinema, and the "audience" has gradually moved away from the traditional concept of the identity of the aesthetic subject to focus on the collective, mass, and genre-oriented nature of the film audience, and the "film audience" in its true sense was born (Yu, 2022).

In light of this change, the relationship between film and people also needs to be rewritten. In existing film studies, the film is always placed as a text in different social, historical, and cultural contexts to depict and reflect some kind of existential dilemmas or other popular issues of people in the real world, but the issue of acculturation and the connection between film texts and social psychology in cross-cultural contexts is often neglected. Films often provide limited imaginary texts, but audiences use this imaginary world to understand social, historical, cultural, and other discursive spaces, and thus make corresponding cognitive and behavioral responses.

For acculturation and communication adaptation theories, their complex structure and new discourse fields are also highlighted again in this study, especially in the cross-cultural context, where, on the one hand, it is easy for film makers to ignore the ever-changing social changes in specific cultural positions and the new issues that constantly emerge or evolve, as well as the differences in understanding between social ethics due to social distance, combined with the portrayal of characters. On the other hand, the recipients of film content will also filter and filter the textual information within their cultural cognition due to their cultural stance, their preferences, understanding inertia, personal experiences, etc., thus generating different emotional experiences and forming phenomena such as cultural recognition, misinterpretation, discounting and barriers, which further affect their willingness to communicate and communication behavior. In this regard, we respond to Q1~Q3 with a comprehensive consideration from both filmmakers and audiences, as well as with a deeper analysis of Chinese social psychological structure.

Textual Perception: Dislocation of Audience Cultural Stance, from "Imaginary Audience" to "Ideal Audience"

Evelyn in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* is a middle-aged woman from China whose family and career are in shambles, who cannot express love, and whose relationship with her daughter Joey is tense. Arguably, this family setting allows the film to be read in a posture that naturalizes interpersonal relationships and provides a natural advantage of psychological acceptance to the film's audience (Chen & Liu, 2023). With East Asian family relationships as its core, the film has obvious cultural similarities with Chinese families in terms of cross-cultural communication, which is the root of the cross-cultural communication it has. However, it has encountered criticism after entering the Chinese market, and both acculturation and communication adaptation has failed. After a rooted study of Chinese

audiences' film reviews, we found that the biggest point of contention among audiences was the conflict and reconciliation of intergenerational values in the film. The film does not refer specifically to East Asia or China, but according to real audience reviews, many people resonate very strongly with the relationship between the mother and daughter in the film, believing that it is about East Asia and the lives of parents and children in real Chinese families of origin.

The identities in the film's representational structure do not fully correspond to those in the real meaning structure, and Chinese audiences unconsciously displace their cultural positions and perspectives during the viewing process, mistaking themselves for the real audience in a sense of immersion and vicariousness. It is an Asian subject with American values, a collision between East Asian family culture and the Western living environment. It artfully reinforces the intergenerational conflict and repressive relationship in the family narrative through the kind of high-density emotions and near-collapse between parents and children in Chinese families. It points to the painful point of Asian families, a more widespread problem among second-generation immigrants in North America, who are divorced from the Chinese community and have become disconnected from Chinese society in terms of geo-relations. The children of this generation of immigrants live in traditional-style families in the East but are educated with Western values, and the intergenerational conflicts and contradictions arising from this context are the result of changes in the American homeland. The director only draws on the American perspective to imagine and portray Asian families, especially Chinese families, stereotypically.

However, this is not a stereotypical gaze on Chinese families, but rather a focus on the "Chinese" minority in American society. Chinese viewers mistake the identity in the structure of appearance for the identity in the structure of meaning and thus take the already blended cultural position as their original, real position. When filming, the director connotes an "ideal audience", while the audience mistakes itself for the "imaginary audience" due to its naturalized receptive advantage, which seems to be a misalignment between the two ends of film production and dissemination. There seems to be a misaligned cultural and psychological structure at both ends of the film production and distribution. This misaligned cultural and psychological structure widens the already existing cultural differences and social distances, making the initial cultural expressions go through a double "filter", and the audience's disapproval brought by this collision makes the attitude of acculturation more "detached". This also increases the predictability of the failure of acculturation and communication adaptation.

Emotional Acceptance: Changes in the Psychological Structure of Chinese Society, "Family of Origin" Becomes a Pain

Whether it is a film like *Everything Everywhere All at Once* whose theme is taken from reality but expressed with absurd scenes and shots, or a film whose theme is detached from reality and based on fiction, it is always reflecting the face of the times and society from different angles and in different forms. Through films, one can get a glimpse of the changes in social psychology and the preview of social symptoms, and explore feasible responses under such social microcosm. Some scholars have applied Freud's theory to the problematic

study of film, arguing that humanities, art, conflict, and suffering in the film are pathways to insight into human nature and understanding of the common human predicament(Roe,2020). The film also enables the interaction and flow of content through cross-cultural communication to range outside of the present time and space, incorporating diverse ethnic, gender, cultural, social, religious, and other pluralistic positions and more complex topics.

The traditional approach to the family education, or "family of origin," has taken on the appearance of a life dilemma and is a hot topic in China, where contemporary Chinese audiences, especially the younger generation, have developed a collective anxiety about controlling parents and traditional parent-child relationships. What *Everything Everywhere All at Once* touches on is a tour of East Asian family values, pointing to the lifelong question of East Asians - "Am I worthy of being loved because I am ordinary, mediocre, substandard, and substandard?" The complexity of Chinese family-of-origin ties is a sore legacy of thousands of years. The basic constituent unit of Chinese society is kinship tied by blood ties, and family relationships and ethical systems are the core of traditional Chinese culture. The concept of "family" has not evolved structurally in Chinese society. Before the 21st century, the Chinese family structure was centered on the extended family, with the closeness of blood as the radiation range, and included a large number of people; after the 21st century, especially with the changes in fertility policies, the scope of the "family" has narrowed, and parents and children constitute a small, complete family unit(Zhihua & Yuqi,2022). The 21st century has also been a period of dramatic change in Chinese society. While the family and educational values of parents are strongly influenced by the pre-21st century, the values and thinking patterns of the children's generation have more complex causes, and therefore intergenerational relationships have become a major social problem in recent years. The term "family of origin" has gradually taken on a negative connotation from a neutral term.

In *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, the creator grafted the conflicts of Chinese families onto the film's lens. Equal rights ideology and liberalism have severely impacted China's long-held patriarchal views, and young people are more reluctant to be tied down. The presentation of the film once touched their painful memories, and driven by empathy, they showed a deeper resistance to the simple reconciliation of their families of origin.

In recent years, a large number of Chinese TV dramas and films have either focused directly on "family of origin trauma" or incorporated elements of "family of origin" into their creations, revealing the "family of origin" pain in East Asian family culture with different themes and story contents. The pain of "family of origin" in East Asian family culture is revealed through different themes and story contents, and the dramatic conflicts and discussions provoke society to reflect on the issue of family of origin. Many films and TV dramas only hope to create a topic of discussion by seizing the gimmick of "family of origin trauma", but they do not go deep into the conflict, lightly using "reconciliation" and "forgiveness" to dissolve the conflict and force "reconciliation". The audience is increasingly reluctant to pay for the "positive energy".

Although the core audience of *Everything Everywhere All at Once* is not necessarily Chinese filmgoers, this controversy also magnifies to some extent the dilemma of cross-acculturation and dissemination. In the process of intercultural film operation, how to agree

with the receivers, maintain a balanced state or stimulate their more positive attitude is the first problem that films must face when entering the market. In the face of complex social and cultural issues, the most prudent approach is to find a common human emotional understanding as the basis of identity. This is an issue that deserves attention in the current audience-centered film market.

Behavior: the dilemma of fusion culture re-dissemination, the inevitable "gaze" of the subject

The film is a multimodal medium that conveys cultural cores through the combination of visual symbols and images. When assessing the relationship between film and social psychology, film and social culture, its communication effects should be included in the study to have a more comprehensive assessment. In cross-cultural communication, the integration of culture and the acceptance of the object are two inevitable propositions, and the accepting object will produce "cultural acceptance," "cultural integration," "cultural discount," and "cultural shock" due to cultural differences and similarities. "cultural discount", "cultural shock" and other different behavioral responses. The producer hopes that the film can leave the "time domain" and "field" and the cultural field to which it belongs, and transcend the original meaning structure of the film to gain a wider range of communication space and time.

The audience's receptive psychology governs this dynamic process, and through the film's narrative empowerment, they establish connections with others, exchange information to achieve self-identification, and adjust the scope of their "gaze". During the viewing period, especially in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* itself contains "Asian," "Chinese," "family relations" During the viewing period, especially in *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, which contains elements such as "Asian," "Chinese," "family relations," and "intergenerational conflict" and has a realistic thematic content, viewers will consciously or unconsciously place themselves in a parallel reference system with the textual structure and identity of the film to gaze at themselves or be gaped at (Wang & Xiaoqing, 2022). When viewers gaze inward and engage in self-gaze, they briefly separate themselves from the characters in the film and examine the film from the creator's perspective; while when viewers are gazed at by the external gaze, they make the social relations in the film proposed to be real, and understand and build self-perception in the social relations in the film.

Thus, in "*Everything Everywhere All at Once*," which is full of "Asian," "Chinese," "family relations," and "intergenerational conflict," the creators themselves have already made an initial integration of Chinese society and culture. *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, which is full of "Asian", "Chinese", "family relations" and "intergenerational conflicts", has already made an initial integration of Chinese society and culture. With such cultural preconceptions, it is easy for Chinese audiences to break the original storytelling space and perform cognitive and receptive acts with a "subject gaze" perspective or cultural examination or substitution, with a more demanding standard. In this regard, *Everything Everywhere All at Once* is not unique in that Disney's *Mulan*, which originated in China in 2020, has been culturally discounted in the Chinese consumer market, failing to generate cultural recognition among Chinese audiences. The most criticized aspect of *Mulan* is the

director's team's false knowledge of Chinese geography and superficial understanding of the symbols of cultural elements, resulting in a film with Chinese elements everywhere but failing to resonate with Chinese audiences(Chen, Chen, & Yang,2021). The misinterpreted integration in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* is also particularly criticized. The Chinese family conflicts seen everywhere touch on deep-seated social issues such as a family of origin and intergenerational conflicts, but the ending turns love into a normative choice and answer, a predictable result of cultural and communication adaptation failure in China, where parent-child relationships have become a mainstream social issue.

CONCLUSION

Reviewing our research questions, the cultural maladjustment of the cross-cultural film *Everything Everywhere All at Once* in China, which takes East Asian family relationships as its kernel of expression, can be attributed in both directions. While the audience's cultural misalignment and subject gazing are certainly important causes, the strategy of fusion cultural re-dissemination should also be adjusted. Especially when the theme of the film has obvious subject orientation, the cultural, social, and psychological changes, and the current structural form should be taken into account, because the behavior of individuals or groups is a combination of culture, society, psychology, and beliefs, and an outdated vision cannot encompass the rapidly changing social life, and it is more difficult to be accepted at the communication level.

From the production point of view, in the usual perception, art films always seem to bear more cultural expressions and reflections on phenomena than commercial films, which are better at using a kind of witty scenes and complex special effects to achieve the purpose of leisure and entertainment and catering to the public. However, in recent years, the content dilemma of films and the changes in the aesthetic psychological mechanism of audiences have implicitly revealed a certain restructuring of the film market ecology. *Everything Everywhere All at Once* adopts a highly intertextual and mismatched combination of cult films and Hong Kong's "nonsense" game genres in a genre collage(Wenshi,2017). The content also captures the maximum contradictory dynamics in the cross-section of society. In the closed text of the film, the inter-generational conflict is placed in multiple times and space, which infinitely amplifies the contradictory tension. In the episode where both Evelyn and her daughter Joey are turned into two stones, this conflict is pulled to a state of near suffocation, and the climax of the film is pushed to the peak as Joey rolls down the cliff. The aesthetic and tragedy are placed in opposition to the truth, and the truth of reality is buried by the tragedy, but it is the existence of this tragedy that intensifies the simplified appearance of the world, allowing people to breathe in the airy pavilion constructed by lies. However, after such emotions are intensified, *Everything Everywhere All at Once* ends with a rushed ending that avoids the real psychological needs of the audience, who wants the questions raised in the film to find a realistic and achievable path in the film. We have to reconsider whether the real mission of cinema is to reveal the real plight of life through art, to cast a "concerned" and "understanding" gaze, or whether it should take on the function of solving real problems.

The conservative reconciliation and the "false" answer of love in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* is perhaps the most roundabout solution that the film can give. The

film can only provide a "public space" to face the collective anxiety dilemma and anxiety, but the problems that cannot be solved in reality cannot be hoped for by the imagination to penetrate the reality, and we cannot put it off to the technical medium of film. In another sense, perhaps as viewers, we also need more solid courage to face reality than the subject matter and textual expression.

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