

# Analysis on the Blooming of Pop Culture from Chinese Fantasy TV Drama Series

"Xiang Mi Chen Chen Jin Ru Shuang"

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**Abstract**—This article is to analyze the genre of Chinese fantasy TV drama series and the author takes the blockbuster named “Xiang Mi Chen Chen Jin Ru Shuang” as an example. It is aimed to discover why are audiences obsessed with fantasy dramas? Why we have two levels of differentiation toward a drama series at the same time? How can film and television series create a positive interaction with audiences? This article is trying to answer these questions.

**Keywords**—Chinese fantasy TV drama series; Xiang Mi Chen Chen Jin Ru Shuang; pop culture; IP; cultural self-confidence

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the era of media convergence, there comes a trend of IP adaptation on screen. The linkage between the network and the radio has brought about the cross-border development of the film and television industry, but it has also been accompanied by "fake audience rating" and "Yin and Yang scripts" and other chaotic phenomena. How to attract audiences while creating the IP, not constrained by capital and traffic, is worth film and TV practitioners' long-term thinking proposition. In recent years, with the gradual differentiation of the network type of drama, under the pressure of strong supporters of historical drama and reality drama, fantasy drama and ancient costume, through martial arts, mythology and other types of mixed themes, killing out of the siege, becoming a black horse, has been the hugely popular Film and TV series genre nowadays in mainland China. The phenomenon appears every year, and this year in 2018 the blockbuster belongs to "Xiang Mi style".

According to CSM52 city data on September 4th, 2018, “Xiang Mi Chen Chen Jin Ru Shuang” (In English it means fragrant honey is heavy, when it burns into ashes, honey sunk like the frost finally, hereinafter referred to as "Xiang Mi") reached 1.3% of the audience, ranking first in the same period and exceeding 1 million webcast. There's no doubt that "Xiang Mi" is the winner of the TV series of the summer of 2018. The early word-of-mouth reviews are good, but the later changes in the plot make "Xiang Mi" the most abused by the audience. "Xiang Mi" won a 10-year high score of 7.3 on Douban (7.6 at the beginning of the show), far better than last year's blockbuster *"Life after Life, Blooms over Blooms"*,

second only to the classic "The Legend of the Fairy Sword" more than a decade ago. However, with the misunderstanding and blackening of the main characters, the plot of the late supporting roles gradually enriched. Fans' circles opened a battle for their respective idols. They even criticized the founding team of "Xiang Mi", including writers, producers, actors and producers, through social channels such as bullet screen(or Dan Mu, which refers to real time comment on screen like bullet) and micro blogs, and so on were involved in the dispute. This is a very interesting phenomenon: your arsenic is my honey, some people are happy, and some are sad. Why are audiences obsessed with fantasy dramas? Why do we have such two levels of differentiation toward a drama series at the same time? How can film and television series create a positive interaction with audiences? With these questions, let us take "Xiang Mi" as an example to analyze the answer.

## II. THE WORLD VIEW OF STORY STRUCTURE AND SELF-CONFIDENCE AND TRADITIONAL CULTURE

At the beginning of the creation of the works, the construction of the world view of the story is the work practice of the film and television industry represented by Hollywood. The advantages of this are self-evident, from macro to micro, from the global to the detailed, which can withstand grinding. World view is the soil of the story, the source of the script, to lay a solid foundation for the overall production of more accurate and professional. It is reported that "Xiang Mi" also borrowed from Hollywood's screenwriting center system, invited the original author of the novel to check the whole process, and hired psychological consultants, set up a screenwriting team and world view department, and even spent half a year to communicate with the original author. 70% of the money is spent on production. Unlike most of the fantasy dramas, "Xiang Mi" is not tasked with low-level special effects, startling lines, and embarrassed facial paralysis actors. Instead, "Xiang Mi" receives a high reputation of excellent costumes, make-up and props, mindful adaptation of plays, oriental charm music and superb acting.

"At the beginning, there is a way to transform the Yin, Yang and the two Qi, and to distinguish between the clear

and the turbid. This is what we know about the two demons of heaven. The Yin and Yang are in harmony, the sun and the moon and the stars are in harmony, the flowers, birds, fish and insects are born, then the good and evil are separated, and then all things practice their own ways, cultivate immortals, demons, and mortals with flesh and blood..." This is the narration of the first episode of "Xiang Mi" and with the wonderful special effects, the Six Worlds of heaven, demons, flowers, people and other unknown universes are gradually emerging. Unlike most fantasy dramas, "Xiang Mi" adopts Taoist philosophy and the cosmological theory of the ancient Han nationality, Huntian, as the philosophical basis and basic framework of the honey world. According to the image of Taoist Taiji, there are Yang in Yin and Yin in Yang. The relationship between sweet honey and the world is also the same. Heaven, demons, flowers and human beings interact and oppose each other in four circles. This is the biggest highlight of the play, the role in "Xiang Mi" is no longer just the configuration between fairies, immortals, immortals and demons, but the so-called "farm circle" hybrid, cross-species chain relationship. The real bodies of characters in the play are all animals and plants, such as grapes, phoenix, dragons, peacocks, peony, carrots, meat, eggplant, chicken essence, jade rabbits and so on. As the "Dao Te Ching" said, "Taoism is born of all things" and "all things have spirits." In this play, all things in the world not only have awareness, can transform each other, all things and feelings, all things can get spiritual power by cultivating immortals. This is the innovation of "Xiang Mi" and the cultural confidence of "Xiang Mi" in traditional classics.

### III. PERSONA'S VALUES AND AUDIENCE'S PSYCHOLOGICAL DEMANDS

The leading actor of "Xiang Mi" Xu Feng (Phoenix) and leading actress Jin Mi (grape essence) have three reincarnation, experience grievances and hatred, watch the love of the millennium, the title of the play "Xiang Mi Chen Chen Jin Ru Shuang" (honey sunk like frost) in fact has already told the core of the story. "Xiang Mi" (Fragrant honey) means that the feelings of men and women are sweet as honey. Phoenix Nirvana day was framed, mistaken from the heavens into the flower world. When Phoenix (Xu Feng)'s life is in danger, kind-hearted grape (Jin Mi) uses her honey to save Phoenix as her "crow". "Chen Chen" (Deepness or heavily) implies that men and women will experience the love robbery, when the female princess was born, she was subdued by her mother to love the "meteorite pill", the real body has been sealed, but also forced to carry a "lockpin" to hide her daughter. In short, this love has been suppressed, and the weight of love is always missing. "Jin" (Ember, burst into ashes) refers to the desire to rebirth, after three generations of life and death, a thousand years of reincarnation, finally Phoenix (Xu Feng) and grape (Jin Mi), man and woman found each other reincarnated in the factual world, Xu Feng found "Ru Shuang" (frost flowers, the real body of Jin Mi), the two also harvested as pure as frost flowers of true love.

If the story line is just love, love-hate obsession and spoiled love-hate obsession, which will fall into the

conventions, although the scriptwriter knows it's safe to do it in that way, the story of Marissau's victory over the Black Lotus also has loyal fans. But innovating and making the branch line more fulfilling in "Xiang Mi" is indeed a bold attempt to break through the fantasy drama series. As the producer of the play said in a news interview, "Xiang Mi" did not have a natural advantage to be born as blockbuster, but it did a good job of correcting the right things that other fantasy drama should be done. There are four storylines: 1. Love (the triangular love of "Fire Dragon Fruit"(Xu Feng, Jin Mi and Runyu), "Liuying and Qiyuan", "Water God and Flower God", "Heaven Emperor and Heaven Queen", "Puchi Jun and Suihe", "Kuangu and Runyu", "Zhangfang Lord and Laohu" etc); 2. Friendship (Jin Mi and Rourou); 3. Kinship (Jin Mi and water god, father and mother, Xu Feng and his parents, Runyu and Heaven Emperor); 4. Conflict (power, strength and status, love and friendship), each line tries its best and lays out the sophisticated structure, to fulfill the effect of you having me and I having you.

The original novel narrates love in the first person of the heroine Jin Mi. After careful adaptation of film and television, the logic becomes much clearer, the group image map of multiple perspectives is established, and the love between men and women in the novel is extended infinitely. Almost all the characters in the play have reasonable places to place their emotions, and the Xiang Mi six worlds of the universe are obtained to stereoscopic presentation. Jin Mi, the female protagonist, went through life and death under the "meteorite pill" from pure beauty to ignorance of the world, and finally calmed the battle of the devil with great love. Xu Feng, the male protagonist, from a sunshine and upright boy, kind but pride prince, while encountered betrayal of relatives and after that learned to bow their heads to sympathize with the suffering of others, finally he is willing to guard their wives Jin Mi and child and become an ordinary man. In the second half of "Xiang Mi", which the most controversial male Runyu's extra scenes and female Liuying's branch love, have been abused by some of the audience, are precisely the foil of the hero's and heroine's love and the fuse and auxiliary thread of the hero's darkening. The protagonists and heroines of the most genuine and virtuous and the most benevolent and righteous are certainly the benchmarks of the works, and the moral standards in the hearts of the audience cannot be trampled upon. However, the fairies the play, all the supporting roles of "life, old, sick, death, hatred, love without leaving, beg without gain" together to build the protagonist's survival of the fairy-knight world of rationality and human nature of the bridge, the so-called "more sad, more beautiful" and "more bitter, more real". Although the leading characters have their own lives for thousands of years, they share the same hardships as mortals. Without perfect drama, appreciating the growth of character is the right way to watch a play. Ultimately, the hero and heroine's happy ending is still achieved in the ordinary world, and the realistic values conveyed by "Xiang Mi" are also revealed.

#### IV. POP CULTURE IN THE FANTASY DRAMA AND THE INSPIRATION FROM “XIANG MI”

Nowadays, fantasy drama represented by “Xiang Mi” can form a tripartite opposition with historical drama and realistic drama, triggering a upsurge of viewing drama across the age group. Besides the economic support of fans of online literature IP plus online PC games, fantasy drama has a tight relationship with the prosperity of martial arts, science fiction, magic and other contemporary world popular culture from the East to the West.

The psychological foundation of the audience is the pursuit of unity of nature and human beings. People's fear of the unknown world and uncontrollable things spawns magic, religion and science. And mankind's yearning for the supernatural force of the magic world runs through the historical process of the whole civilization. From fiction, animation, games to film and television, science (cosmic explosion, space-time overlap, and human nature crisis), religion (this life to cultivate the truth in order to become a Buddha) has become a new "realism" of literary and artistic creation. Because of the burden of secular life and the tangle of the external world, all living beings in the fantasy of the world have to find a pure land. What is truth? What is false?

#### V. CONCLUSION

To Sum up, the fictitious and open life of the leading characters in the fantasy play is exactly the real pain point of the real people. Knowing that the characters in the play are not real people, they are willing to immerse themselves in the world of drama. For example, the Six Realms created by "Xiang Mi" have experienced three vicissitudes of life and death, but eventually they are all awakened to freedom, selflessness and supernatural comfort in the fragrant universe. It is true that the mainstream culture under the banner of realism may not be able to accept the popularity of fantasy drama, but there is reason to believe that the heated discussion brought about by “Xiang Mi” will enable more audiences to rationally look at the social and psychological demands behind the fantasy drama, and that the creation of “Xiang Mi” and the outlook on the universe will also open the way for Chinese traditional culture. It is a brand new way to go global and develop cultural self-confidence.

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