From the perspective of Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, "The Flowers of War" and "The 13 Flowers of Nanjing"

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Abstract. This report analyzes the text of *The Flowers of War* and combines the three dimensions of Hofstede's cultural dimension theory: that is power distance, individualism and collectivism, and masculinity and femininity. This report uses plot line and character dialogue as the breakdown point to analyze two different types of female images: students and prostitutes. Through the attitude of the outside world, the living environment and personal cognition. All these differences show the differences between the two groups of girls m that analyzing the collision of people to females and the female herself shows the characteristics of the times. These two groups of people, analyzing the collision of people to females and the female herself shows the characteristics of the times. This report also reflects the change in the two groups from individualism, independent thinking and unlike with each other between the two groups: collectivism, when faced with danger, sacrifice self-interest for the collective benefit. The report is to affirm the value of women themselves, let women perceive their subjective consciousness, and safeguard women's interests.

Keywords: Feminism, "The Flowers of War", Patriarchal society.

1. Introduction

'The 13 Flowers of Nanjing' is a novel created by Yan Geling. It had adapted as a film— *'The Flowers of War'* by Zhang Yimou in 2011. The Nanjing Massacre in the War of Resistance against Japan as the background, tells a story of the two different identities of people: prostitutes and girl students in the church in Nanjing in 1937. The story is unfolded by "Aunt Shujuan", one of the girl students, who have a depth relationship with Yumo.

The characters in this work are very complicated; it is doomed that they cannot be described in simple words. Their identities, experiences, and personalities are different. They are not perfect people, and they are selfish and biased. But in the face of death threats, they showed the best things in human nature: the prostitutes who came to seek asylum quarreled with the female students in the church and hated each other, but they protected the female students with their own lives in the crisis; To protect the people, Instructor Li, who stuck to the front line of the war, killed several malicious Japanese troops with his own life; Doukou, a 15-year-old young girl, gave up her self-respect to live, had a sad life experience, but fell in love with a dying soldier, Pusheng. She returned to the dangerous brothel to look for the strings, in order to play the lute for Pusheng; before she was killed, she still thought of beautiful love.

The story shows the love and hate of every character, the problems, and the danger from the outside environment. In the small world of the church under the shaping of the details of the environment and language, the author has created a new story, not only physically, but also spiritually. The mutual clash and hatred between prostitutes and girl students change to giving up their interests and replace the girl students to go to the banquet of Japanese: a banquet that is full of danger and destined to be gone. Throughout the whole story, all the girls have been spiritually sublimated by the impact of the outside world.

2. Hofstede's Cultural Dimension Theory

This report is generated by the study of research papers, historical documents, text, lines, and adaptations. In addition, this paper will carry out detailed research and analysis of the story progression, characters' lines, and the character's body language in the works. And this paper will use text analysis to make a more in-depth and accurate description of the awakening of female subject consciousness reflected in the film and how to treat female subject consciousness from Hofstede's cultural dimension theory.

In the late 1960s, Dutch psychologist Geert Hofstede conducted a large-scale questionnaire survey for more than one hundred thousand employees from more than 40 countries who were employed by IBM, a large multinational company, and proposed four dimensions to analyze cultural differences in different countries. Later, Hong Kong scholars added the fifth dimension, long-term and short-term Orientation.

Nowadays, Hofstede's theory of cultural latitude consists of six latitudes, power distance, Individualism-Collectivism, Masculinity-Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance Uncertainty Avoidance, long term-and short-term Orientation, Indulgence, and Restraint. This research will use the first three items: power distance, Individualism-Collectivism, and Masculinity-Femininity as the theme and research tool to analyze '*The Flowers of War*'.

2.1 Power Distance

Power Distance, which means the degree to which members with less power in countries and organizations expect and accept uneven distribution of power. Hofstede's theory of cultural latitude has a very high Power Distance index of 80 for China, and China's Power Distance index is one of the highest in the world, which proves that in China, the acceptance of uneven distribution of power is very high, the status between superiors and subordinates is very polarized, and from the public perspective, Chinese society believes that inequality between people is acceptable, All people are under the influence of the people in power, and they are optimistic about the information and culture that the people in power convey.

2.2 Individualism and Collectivism

Individualism-Collectivism, which means the degree of dependence between people in a society. The higher the index, the shallower the relationship between countries and people, and people will consider their own interests and ideas more. China's Individualism and Collectivism index is only 20, which means that China is a high collectivist country. People tend to make efforts and sacrifices for collective interests rather than personal interests. Their consideration of things and decision-making are also more affected by the group. In this environment, people are more likely to form small groups that help and trust each other, and are more indifferent to people outside the group, even hostile.

2.3 Masculinity and Femininity

Finally, the Masculinity and Femininity index refers to whether the country and society are more inclined to take masculine Masculinity (competition and achievement, and material success) as the goal of their efforts, or more inclined to take Femininity (caring for others, pursuing social quality and life) as the goal of their efforts. China's Masculinity and Femininity index is 66, which means that people tend to value competition more and pursue material sufficiency, money, or status more. In countries with a high masculinity index, people sometimes prefer to give up the quality of life or self-esteem or even life in exchange for material success or achievements. In a masculine society, women's social status is often low; people will be more critical of women and have higher requirements for women. In this social environment, women are often influenced, criticize, and despise their own behavior, and are oppressed by the social influence in spirit [1].

3. Cultural Dimension Theory and "*The Flowers of War*"

3.1 Power Distance

According to the Hofstede study data, China's PDI is 80. Comparing it to other countries in the study, the culture in traditional China favors high power distance, implying that there is a general acceptance of inequality of power in organizations, that relationships between superiors and subordinates tend to be polarized, and that subordinates cannot rebel against the authority of superiors, and that subordinates are happy to be directed and led.

From the encounters and experiences of the women of Qinhuai in The Thirteen Hairpins of the Golden Age, it can be seen that the power distance is accentuated under the dual oppression of the patriarchal society of the old era and the war. It is not only the oppression and stereotyping of women by men, the contempt and objectification of women, but also the tolerance, indifference, and even habituation of women to the oppression of women. The attitude of the two priests towards the "women of Qinhuai" is a direct reflection of the fact that in the context of thousands of years of patriarchy, inequality between human beings is acceptable and expected, and that the powerful group is indifferent and oppressive towards the disadvantaged, does not care, and does not even exist as "human beings". and "how do I let such things into my reading room?" [2]. As priests are supposed to treat all people equally, but the way they treat the Qin Huai women shows that they divide people into three, six, and nine classes, which reveals on a psychological level that men, as the powerful group in society, subconsciously believe that it is normal to oppress women or the disadvantaged and that this inequality is acceptable. The two main groups of women in the play, the "schoolgirls" and the "Qinhuai women", have a violent ideological conflict from the very beginning, and the schoolgirls, as representatives of traditional values, show their attitude towards the Qinhuai women, which reveals the traditional Chinese culture's perception of the special status of prostitutes. The female students, as representatives of the traditional values among them, their attitude towards the women of Qinhuai reveals the traditional Chinese culture's perception of the special status of prostitutes, led by Shujuan, who considers them as "inferior" and disdains to associate with them. "Fie, did I talk to you? Are you worthy of my accent?" Meng Shujuan took on the attitude of a smiling man with a raised hand. In the church, the "attic" where the schoolgirls lived and the "basement" where the women lived also symbolized the spatial disparity in social status, implying the difference between "noble" and the distinction between "noble" and "inferior" is implied [3]. This distinction in effect creates a hierarchy, and everyone labels themselves according to this system. Even the Qinhuai women themselves say sarcastically in the text, "All women in this war, regardless of age or status, are the spoils of war for the men with their pants down." And Yu Mo also said: "The Japanese... Isn't it just to have fun, sisters are in this line of work, what kind of man have not seen? As long as we make it back alive, we can make do with it. How are you going to let the little girls deal with that, even if they make it back alive?" Since ancient times, it has been said that we merchant women do not know grief of ruined nation, but still sing flowers in the backyard across the river. We simply go to do an unyielding thing and change the curse since ancient times. Enchanting sons are said to be heartless, tomorrow our sisters also to do a sentient and righteous thing. These words correspond to a kind of idea that prostitutes are not clean, dirty, humble, and the church female students young, pure, knowledgeable, noble, is the future of the country and nation, by prostitutes instead of teaching female students to go to the disaster, the loss of the country and nation will be smaller, cost-effective.

For thousands of years, traditional China was a typically patriarchal society in which male-centrism permeated all aspects of social life. Because of the innate limitations of women, it was difficult for them to participate in all aspects of farming and warfare, and the main tasks of society were performed by men, who made the main contribution to social development. Coupled with the traditional division of labor between men who farmed and women who wove in a small-peasant economy and the influence of historical factors, women were deprived of the opportunity to participate in social life and were trapped in the family, which led to the low status of women in society, even to the extent of being subordinate to men. For a long period of history, women could

not even exist as independent individuals. In such a social context, the traditional role of women was positioned as the servant of the family and the champion of men, while men, as the dominant group, never stopped oppressing women, sometimes without even realizing that it was already oppression. The women in the work, as women in the patriarchal context of the time, were already in low status and engaged in a lowly profession that was scorned by the morality of the society, they not only despised themselves, but also despised and disdained the prostitutes by the same female students under the oppression of the old era, which showed the self-objectification and oppression of women in the old era in the typical patriarchal social context of gender inequality, and seemed to have accepted this existence of oppression or no longer consider it as such.

Does a "dusty" woman deserve to die for a "pure" woman? Unlike other films, the feminism in this film has not reached an "awakening". The disparity in social status allows the women in the film to label themselves as "noble" or "inferior". While the students scorn these women as the scum of society, the women also consider it their duty and responsibility to die for the students. All these signs are since people at that time were already paralyzed by social stereotypes, but the fact is that there is no distinction between high and low status, or that life should be equal. Women's self-consciousness, their perception of their worth, and their self-criticism in this film are extreme. In this film, it is not only the men's minds that are shackled but also the women's mindset that is suppressed.

3.2 Masculinity and Femininity

Masculinity and Femininity is one of Geert Hofstede's cultural dimension theories which extend to how much a society values the traditional male and female roles. Masculinity, in this case, represents a clear social gender role differentiated society that values assertiveness, courage, strength, and competition, whereas femininity in contrast values cooperation, nurturing, and quality of life. Under the special background of Sino Japanese war, the film *The Flowers of War* has revealed the realistic predicament that women are being oppressed by the masculine society in the typical oriental culture through the plot and characters' performances. The characters in the film are placed in a society where patriarchal culture had already become a default rule. Under such cultural background, men grow up with natural gender oppression against women while women unconsciously internalized the male gaze's oppression [4].

Masculinity is displayed through the overall patriarchal society in this work. The existence of female characters is a reflection of patriarchal society's "virgin obsession". "Shujuan wanted to tell her peers about her menarche, but it was hard to open her mouth. She had degenerated from a girl to a woman, which was the source of all evils." [5]. From the description of Shujuan's thoughts in the book, it is able to tell the difference and value judgment between "girl" and "woman" in a virilism society. In the main plot of *The Flowers of War* and *The 13 Flowers of Nanjing*—the Qin Huai River women replaced the female students and sacrificed—this masculine thought of "girl" better than "woman" has been reaffirmed. From the perspective of patriarchal society, a perfect woman must not only be having a noble soul but more importantly is having a "pure "body. In order to get rid of the superficial impurity of Yu Mo, the director must give a reasonable cause. Therefore, Yu Mo must cover herself up to achieve the demand for perfection from the perspective of the director and audience. Yu Mo first led the women of Qin Huai River to sacrifice which remove their stain of being a prostitute. Then, further strengthened Yu Mo's helplessness and desolation of becoming a prostitute by revealing her past—being raped by her stepfather at the age of 13. However, the film is whitewashing the "impurity" of Yu Mo, and paying such efforts only highlights the "virgin obsession" under a patriarchal society [6].

One of the most outstanding artistic features of *The 13 Flowers of Nanjing* is that it used a feminist narrative technique to unfold the story from a female perspective, which this feminist expression displayed Hofstede's femininity theory through the plot of both novel and film. In the film, the narrator Meng Shujuan recalls from the first-person perspective, taking the women of Qinhuai River as the main characters of the film's heroism [7]. Through Shujuan's perspective, the appearance of these Qin Huai River women was introduced when she was standing in front of the church's glass

window. Her impression of these Qin Huai River women has always been that they are an inferior group of people. They enjoy their life like nothing is happening while they were actually under a war condition and had conflicts with the female student group where Shujuan is. All of their actions displayed a strong contrast with the female students. However, the female students' views on the women of Qinhuai River have changed by the climax of the film. In the end, these Qinhuai River women replaced the students and became heroes of the female students. “They hid all the things that could be used as concealed weapons: steak knives, fruit knives, hairpins. If they were lucky, a hairpin can get one of his eyes. When they put on the choir gowns, the doorbell rang again. The girls found that they really looked like a group of innocent girls, each holding a music score and a gilded Bible.” [8]. The images of these Qin Huai River women until the end are still weak, beautiful, and stereotypically feminine [9].

3.3 Individualism and Collectivism

With the research of Hofstede's cultures dimensions theory, individualism and collectivity are a model for measuring the integration of people into groups in society. In individualism, the connection between individuals is loose and has a sense of "I." Collectivism, by contrast, is a cohesive group that maintains harmony and promotes a sense of "we." According to the social disparity index scores of 76 countries surveyed by Hofstede et al. in 2010, China's IDV ranking is 20 [10]. With this in mind, China is where collectivism prevails compared with Western countries. Based on this definition, the artwork "*The Flowers of War*" presents a process of transformation from individualism to collectivism.

In the first instance, individualism was first manifested in the godfathers and the students in the church, and the interlopers, the fourteen Qinhuai women. Furthermore, paralyzed by the stereotypes of old China, Father Ingman, and the girls are disgusted with the arrival of fourteen prostitutes. In their perspectives, their act of taking refuge in the church was nothing short of blasphemy against the holy place of purity and a disgrace to God. Hence, when the women broke into the church, the godfather said, "I'd rather let in Japanese soldiers than let them in!" [11]. In this regard, the mentality possessed by the schoolgirls and the godfather reveals the intellectual corruption and stereotypes brought about by the old China of the time, while it also exhibits the loose connections between people in the individualistic society. Likewise, as individualistic, the women of Qinhuai maintain a defiant mindset and scoff at the comments of the schoolgirls. They occupied the cellar and looked for different pleasures to enjoy the last merriment in these endless days. In comparison, the students sang hymns loudly in the church as if they were the opposition between "chaste" and "indecent", trying to draw a clear distinction from the Qinhuai women [12]. Thus, the phenomenon of independent thinking and understanding expressed by both groups, not compromising with others and only taking care of the small group, reflects the individualistic thinking in Hofstede's theory [13].

As the story progresses, Japanese soldiers break into the "sanctuary" church and find young schoolgirls taking refuge in the church. Despite the fact that St. Paul's church belongs to the neutral relationship in the Occupation, which in other words, is a protected zone, the Japanese army loses its mind and wants to defile the schoolgirls. In this state of affairs, John, who was hiding in the closet, held the Red Cross flag (represent protection) and stood up to angrily denounce the invasion and irrational behavior of the Japanese soldiers. With John standing up for and protecting several female students with his own body, it showed the cohesive and protective power of exposing collectivist ideas. Along with the discovery of collectivism, individualism in the church slowly broke down. In the film, the female students also show the actions of a collective society of thought and action. They lead the Japanese in another direction so as not to expose the Qinhuai women hiding in the basement. Furthermore, it was when the Japanese army broke into the church for the second time and forcibly invited 13 female students to join the Japanese celebration that the individualism of the women of Qinghuuai began to notice a change. When the girls noticed the request to attend the party, they decided to jump together and end their lives. At this point, Yumo, the leader of the prostitutes, steps forward and decides to go to the Japanese army's party instead of them. Although this action was

initially taken to appease the students; however, they ended up changing out of their beautiful cheongsams, cutting their hair short, and putting on the students' uniforms. As the women of Qinhuai played the piano and sang their songs, the two individualisms truly became a collectivist society.

Undoubtedly, the collectivism shown in this movie is imposing; how the women sacrifice their lives to protect the girls is awe-inspiring. In addition, the collectivism shown in the plot is not only reflected in the rescue of lives but also in the liberation of thinking. After the girls had experienced this with the Qinhuai women, the schoolgirls were no longer bound to a cage of purity and chastity but had a deeper understanding of sex and therefore broke the social stereotype of women [14].

4. Summary

Based on three latitudes of Hofstede's theory of cultural latitude, power distance, individualism - collectivism, and masculinity-femininity, this paper expounds in detail on the cultural characteristics reflected by the two types of women in '*The Flowers of War'* and feminism in the process of transformation. This research project will reveal and introduce the potential oppression and prejudice against women in society by uncovering the core of feminist debates and stereotypes in old Chinese society. On the other hand, this report is to let women feel their subjective consciousness, affirm their value, and emphasize the maintenance of women's interests. All in all, the ultimate goal of this report is to enable people to find equality and respect in the tragedies brought about by history, and bring certain importance to future objective thought, status value, and consciousness.

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