

# The Conflicts and Amalgamation between Chinese Culture and Western Culture from the Movie Guasha

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**Abstract:** When conflicts transform to amalgamation due to the understanding, our culture will also become richer and the communication between countries develop more deeply. This dissertation tries to talk about the differences between Chinese culture and western culture through some significant aspects. At the meantime the reason which causes culture conflicts will also be discussed, for the instance, the mode of thinking, concept of value and cultural focus. Of course, the solution of culture shocks will be put forward, and it requires us to ask and explain, do exercises and access various kinds of English works. Having done that, culture conflicts can be avoided and culture could develop into prosperity.

## 1. Introduction

The movie GuaSha is seen as a representative product which shows the difference between Chinese culture and western culture that also arouses sympathetic response among immigrants who have lived in western countries for years. So the enthusiasm on studies of the movie has never stopped. Literacy criticism has been made from different perspectives, and the culture shock reflected in the film has been deeply discussed and analysed.

In the article The Perspective of Sino-US cultural differences and conflicts from the movie "scraping": Discourse System Concept[1], the famous linguist Ron Scollon American social discourse system proposed theoretical framework, starting from the four parts of discourse systems - ideological, social, textual form and face systems, cultural differences and conflicts reflected in the movie "scraping"; In the article Cultural myth and identity politics - Rereading the cultural conflict in the movie guasha[2], the author draws the conclusion that the film is a special form which can reproduced politics; In the article The analysis of cultural conflict in the movie Guasha from the theoretical framework[3], the author considers that the Movie "scraping" shows a series of misunderstandings and conflicts in the Chinese and Americans on the scraping events. Why do these contradictions and conflicts happen, many articles expound from the perspective of the cross-cultural communication, cultural choices or identity politics to analyze the reasons for these contradictions. This paper is trying to dissert from the perspective of the theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics to analyze the root cause of the movie produced by Sino-US cultural conflict. It will provide readers with a new perspective; In the article Analysis of Cultural Differences in the movie "scraping" from the discourse of holism[4], the author draws the conclusion that movie "scraping" tells the story of a judicial conflict of Chinese immigrants in the United States caused by cultural differences, the performance of Chinese and Western cultures collides and continues to reconcile. In this study, the overall discourse is upon the theoretical framework, the film focuses on the Cultural Differences "scraping" from the ethical, human and empirical aspects.

There are quite a lot of people do the research about the conflicts and amalgamation between Chinese and western culture from the movie Guasha. But most of them are based on the whole body of the movie and criticize on the meaning of the movie. What's more, there are no available articles about the specific details of the scenario which can represent some culture shocks. What do the main conflicts show in the film and why do those conflicts happen? So how can we avoid such conflicts and promote each other's communication? What can we do to get further understanding of



western culture and make our traditional culture be more easily accepted by foreigners? In the following chapter, those questions will be discussed.

## **2. Common Conflicts in the Movie *Guasha* and the Reason for this Phenomenon**

The movie *Guasha* depicts a story about cultural clashes between China and America, which is primarily triggered by the traditional Chinese scraping therapy. It is undeniable that there are enormous differences in Chinese and Western culture, which are bound to be deeply engraved in their residents.

### **2.1 Conflicts in the scraping treatment.**

The scraping treatment has a history of more than 3000 years. Chinese people have their own unique way of thinking and explaining Chinese traditional medical treatment. However, it is quite incomprehensible for those western people. As a result, the scraping treatment causes a series of adversities to Datong, such as losing the custody of his son, unwillingly getting his father to return China, escaping with his son, being separated from his wife and unsoldering ties of friendship with his boss.

In the film, Datong spared no efforts to make Americans understand the principles of Chinese traditional medicine. He explained in this way: In Chinese, traditional medical theory, the human body is a unbroken whole, so the discomfort in any part will impart the balance of the whole body ; points and meridians were distributed everywhere in the human body; unlike western medicine which is inclined to take stopgap medicine, Chinese medicine takes the whole body into consideration. But when it comes to some terms of Chinese medicine such as “dan tian”, “jing luo” , Datong even cannot find the corresponding words for English translation, then he had to use alphabet instead. Americans cannot understand the so-called “gas” circulates in the human body, because this theory is unable to be explained in science. They have been accustomed to the autopsy, which means that by dissection, we can make a specific analysis of the human body. Owing to that western culture is based on experimental basis in science and culture, westerners advocate science and technology and their culture utterly different from that of China.

### **2.2 Conflicts in how to discipline children.**

As a naughty boy, Dennis likes to beat other children in the kindergarten so that Datong gave him corporal punishment several times. Here the parents’ attitude towards their children’s behavior mirrors cultural differences.

In China, it is reasonable enough for Chinese parents to discipline their children, just as an old Chinese saying goes “It is the father’s duty on the son’s mistake”. It is quite common that Chinese parents always firstly find their own children’s fault when dealing with children’s fight. However, American parents attach more importance to facts. That explains why American people thought the way Chinese parents discipline children like what Datong do to Dennis is rude, even though he had the trend of maltreatment.

As a matter of fact, American people did wrong to Chinese parents like Datong. Chinese parents are known for their affection for their children, even to the degree of dotage. As for Chinese parents, children are the continuation of their own lives and blood and their own private property, so other people have no right to interfere in their educating children. Chinese parents have firm belief in strict educational approaches, such as admonition, corporal punishment and even mistreatment, which is for the sake of their children and contributes to making these children full of promise. To Americans, however, individualism has the highest priority, everyone is an independent island in the vast human sea, so do the child, so they should be treated with their deserved respect and have special protection. That’s why the hospital in the film immediately inform the court to sue Dennis’s parents, which brings an end to this family’s tranquil life.

### **2.3 Conflicts in the question of “face”.**

Another queer Chinese culture in western eyes is the Chinese alleged “face”. Xu Datong and his



boss are good friends. When Dennis fought with his boss's son, Datong slapped his own son in the presence of his boss so as to show his respect for his boss. At the hearing, his boss told the fact that Datong once slapped Dennis, which made Datong fairly desperate and raged, so he ended the working relation and friendship with his boss. To his boss, the truth of Dennis's being beaten is the most important, so he had a hard time in understanding that Datong beaten Dennis so as to give him "face". What outraged Datong was that his boss was ungrateful and even appeared at the court as a witness of Dennis's being beaten. Owing to the cultural difference, Americans cannot understand what "face" means on earth, even Chinese people themselves are unable to give a scientific definition about "face". Even so, Chinese people still pay much attention to "face saving", which is relevant to one of Chinese culture foundation—Confucian. As Yum puts it, "The Confucian legacy of consideration for others and concern for proper human relationships has led to the development of communication patterns that preserve one another's face. Indirect communication helps prevent the embarrassment of rejection by the other person or disagreement among patterns." [5]

## **2.4 Reasons for conflict phenomenon.**

The conflict appearing in the film is only a tip of the iceberg, but it has almost destroyed a happy family. Given this, it is urgent to improve the ability of intercultural communication so as to smooth the communication and avoid the conflicts. In addition, intercultural communication offers people a colorful world and widen people's scope, so it is necessary to have a good knowledge of the conflicts in cross-cultural communication so as to promote and benefit from it.

There are various reasons resulting in the cultural conflicts between China and western countries. The basic reason is that China and western countries have different cultural background. All of these will surely lead to the differences in people's thought patterns, view of values and so on. The author will show some reasons as follows: Difference in the mode of thinking; Difference in Concept of Value; Difference in Cultural Focus; Difference in Language Transference.

## **3. Measures to Avoid Conflicts in Teaching**

Though English learners know the importance of cultural background in cross-cultural communication, their living and learning environment make it difficult for them to learn foreign culture knowledge, because they have accustomed to their mode of thinking, the surrounding environment and culture. As far as the author is concerned, they can improve their ability of intercultural communication from the perspective of teaching. When giving English classes, teachers should combine the language and culture together so as to make simultaneous development. Furthermore, teachers should timely introduce the difference of value orientation, thinking mode, the national characteristics, and etiquette customs in different culture, with the help of a variety of teaching methods, so as to enhance the students' cultural accomplishment.

In English daily teaching, the teachers should introduce the necessary cultural knowledge, such as cultural background, customs and habits to students so that students can achieve what they have learnt to make effective and appropriate communication. For example, in junior school textbook, Volume 16 class, there is a dialogue, a little girl asked a foreign lady the age. The lady tactfully answered that it's a secret. After teaching the conversation, the teacher asked his students why the little girl cannot get the direct answer from the lady, many students shook their heads. Then the teacher told them, there is a difference of national culture: in China, people can ask others' age to show concern and cordiality, but in English-speaking countries, with exception to children, people do not easily ask an adult the age, especially woman or the elderly so as to avoid invading others' privacy. Therefore, in cross-cultural communication with foreigners, we must avoid asking the age, social status, salary and the private life of others. Of such questions, there is nothing wrong with Chinese people. However, for those who come from English-speaking countries these are considered to be personal privacy, to which they attach great importance and they do not want others to interfere in their individual matters. Therefore, such questions should not be interfered, otherwise, it is impolite. After the explanation, the children nodded their heads to express their understanding.



#### **4. Conclusion**

All in all, our beliefs, values, or cultural patterns and orientations determine what we perceive, how we react to situations, and how we talk to people. Knowing the differences in cultural patterns or orientations is far more important than just know whether people eat with chopsticks or knives and forks. This discovery will help us better understand the diversity and genius existing in the Western and Eastern. What's more, understanding other cultures allow Chinese people to gain insight into their own culture. And as the Halls put it, "An understanding of different cultures may well be our own most important asset in meeting the challenges of our times, both abroad and at home."

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