

An Analysis on the Hidden Transcripts and Power: A Cultural Study on Conflict between Mother and Daughter-in-Law in Contemporary Chinese Television Dramas

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Abstract : As the most influential media for the dissemination of Chinese culture, films and television dramas have played cognitive orientation in guiding young audience to understand its cultural value. Taking a retrospective overview of the Chinese domestic film and television dramas in the last decade, it is tangible to notice that Westernization has become irresistible force in the presentation of Chinese youth culture, such as the rise of sensibility, publicity of subjectivity, and the resistance to mainstream discourse. However, the process of deconstruction and transition of these film and television works on Western youth culture brought about more comprehensive conflicts and integration rather than providing a panoramic interpretation to young Chinese. Issues of tradition and modernization, oriental and Western, and serious thinking and the spirit of entertainment overwhelmed those Chinese works. This study attempts to examine the mechanism of young Chinese's resistance, compromise and re-construction in their marriages during the dynamic cultural intergration between traditional Chinese culture and Western culture. To investigate such a mechanism, this study analyzed four Chinese television dramas themed on family ethics to reveal the conflictions between two generations, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, aiming to identify their strategies of their struggles. Incorporating the theory of Scott's weapons of the weak, this study examines the dynamic model of the struggles content analysis on their hidden language and the power. The finding shows that young Chinese identified their self-awakening during the resistance. The study also finds out that the external factors might have the functions of switching the power from the strong end to the weak end. The finding of this study can provide useful insights for researchers in this area and for those in the process of exploring cultural integration issues.

Keywords : intergration, integration, resistance, youth culture

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