

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CINEMATIC
TECHNIQUE OF *CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON*
*AND LET THE BULLET FLY***

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FACULTY OF CREATIVE ARTS

UNIVERSITI MALAYA

KUALA LUMPUR

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CINEMATIC TECHNIQUE
OF *CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON AND LET
THE BULLET FLY*

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A Comparative Study of the Cinematic Technique of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Let the Bullet Fly*

ABSTRACT

This study conducts a comprehensive comparative analysis of the cinematic techniques of two iconic Chinese commercial films: "Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon" directed by Ang Lee, and "Let the Bullets Fly," directed by Jiang Wen. This study aims to fill key knowledge gaps by exploring the artistic and commercial elements of these films, emphasizing the application and impact of cinematic techniques. This study adopts a qualitative research design using comparative research and textual analysis. Using the Mise-en-scène concept as a theoretical framework, the literature review provides insights into existing research on cinematic techniques, making up for the lack of research on specific applications of technology in Chinese commercial films. The thesis helps to understand how their cinematic techniques shape the narrative structure and visual aesthetics of their respective films. The study identifies these two films' similarities and differences in cinematic techniques and the influence of these film techniques on modern Chinese films. providing valuable insights to filmmakers, academics, and industry practitioners.

Keywords: Cinematic Techniques, "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon", "Let the Bullets Fly"

A Comparative Study of the Cinematic Technique of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Let the Bullet Fly*

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini menjalankan analisis perbandingan komprehensif mengenai teknik sinematik dua filem komersial Cina ikonik: "Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon" yang diarahkan oleh ang lee, dan "Let the Bullets Fly," yang diarahkan oleh jiang wen. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengisi jurang pengetahuan utama dengan meneroka elemen artistik dan komersial filem ini, menekankan aplikasi dan kesan teknik sinematik. Kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk penyelidikan kualitatif menggunakan penyelidikan perbandingan dan analisis teks. Menggunakan konsep mise-en-scène sebagai rangka kerja teori, tinjauan kesusasteraan memberikan pandangan tentang penyelidikan sedia ada mengenai teknik sinematik, menebus kekurangan penyelidikan mengenai aplikasi khusus teknologi dalam filem komersial Cina. Tesis membantu memahami bagaimana teknik sinematik mereka membentuk struktur naratif dan estetika visual filem masing-masing. Kajian mengenal pasti persamaan dan perbezaan kedua-dua filem ini dalam teknik sinematik dan pengaruh teknik filem ini terhadap filem cina moden. Memberikan pandangan berharga kepada pembuat filem, ahli akademik dan pengamal industri.

Kata kunci: teknik sinematik, "harimau bongkok, naga tersembunyi", "biarkan peluru terbang"

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In this research, the author conducts a comprehensive analysis and comparative evaluation of two of the most influential commercial films in modern Chinese cinema. Since around 2000, marked by the release of Zhang Yimou's film "*Hero*," Chinese cinema has progressively embraced the path of commercial blockbusters, resulting in the proliferation of numerous commercial films. This study delves into the significance, objectives, methodologies, theoretical frameworks, scope, and limitations inherent in this cinematic trend.

In recent years, China's commercial film industry has experienced significant expansion and transformation, which has led to notable changes in film production, distribution, and audience preferences. This study aims to conduct a thorough examination of the technical distinctions between the films "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" and "*Let the Bullets Fly*" through an in-depth analysis of their cinematic techniques. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for filmmakers, scholars, audiences, and the film industry, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of film production quality, the expansion of film research, and the enrichment of the cinematic experience for audiences.

1.2 Background of Study

Film occupies an important place as a form of cultural expression and plays a vital role across the globe. As a major player in the film industry, China has experienced significant growth and transformation in recent decades. China's commercial film era began around 2000, with the release of Zhang Yimou's film *"Hero"*. Since then, Chinese films have gradually embarked on the path of commercial blockbusters (Yang, 2012). The emergence of films such as *"House of Flying Daggers"*, *"The Banquet"*, and *"Curse of the Golden Flower"* focused on visual effects and set off a trend of period films that lasted for more than ten years.

With the vigorous development of China's economy and the diversification of cultural consumption, the Chinese film market has undergone tremendous changes over the past few decades. In 1993, the issuance of the "Opinions on the Current Deepening of the Reform of the Film Industry Mechanism" marked the official beginning of the marketization of the film industry. In 2002, the promulgation of the "Film Industry Promotion Law" further established the film industry as a commercial cultural industry, paving the way for the industrialization of Chinese cinema (Guo Yuang, 2024). From the early days of limited production and genre constraints to now becoming one of the largest film markets in the world, the development of China's film industry has been nothing short of rapid. Films have not only become an important part of entertainment life but also a significant medium for cultural exchange and commercial value. Throughout this process, the trend of commercialization has become increasingly evident, reflected in the integration of the industrial chain, technological innovation, and

content creation. In the face of increasingly fierce domestic and international competition, the Chinese film industry is exploring development paths that align with its unique characteristics, aiming to achieve sustained commercial success while maintaining cultural diversity.

This period also marked the rise of commercial blockbusters in China. In recent years, Chinese commercial films have experienced unprecedented prosperity. This time not only witnessed the rapid growth of the film market but also brought major changes in Chinese film production, distribution, and audience preferences. During this period, the two most representative movies in Chinese business were "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" and "*Let the Bullets Fly*."

Film Synopsis

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon directed by Ang Lee, is an adaptation of Wang Dulu's novel. Set during the Qing dynasty, the film follows the intertwined lives of several characters, particularly the martial artist Li Mu Bai (played by Chow Yun-fat), his close friend Yu Shu Lien (Michelle Yeoh), and the young, rebellious warrior Jen Yu (Zhang Ziyi). The film revolves around the legendary Green Destiny sword, which is stolen by Jen, setting off a series of events involving betrayal, freedom, and the struggle between traditional values and personal desires. The film blends action with profound philosophical themes, particularly the pursuit of freedom and the consequences of desire.

The film is renowned for its stunning choreography, philosophical depth, and beautiful cinematography. It was widely praised for its ability to convey traditional Chinese cultural elements while maintaining global appeal.

Cast and Crew

Director: Ang Lee, filmmaker, known for his ability to bridge Eastern and Western cinema. He has won multiple awards for his films, including *Brokeback Mountain* and *Lust, Caution*, both of which have achieved international acclaim.

Cast:

Chow Yun-fat as Li Mu Bai, a skilled martial artist who seeks peace and resolution.

Michelle Yeoh as Yu Shu Lien, a powerful and loyal warrior torn between duty and her own desires.

Zhang Ziyi as Jen Yu, the strong-willed young woman who seeks freedom and challenges the societal constraints imposed on her.

Chang Chen as Lo, a love interest and key figure in Jen's emotional journey.

Awards and Recognition

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon received widespread acclaim and numerous prestigious awards:

Academy Awards (2001): Won Best Foreign Language Film and was nominated for Best Art Direction, Best Original Score, and Best Adapted Screenplay.

Golden Globe Awards (2001): Won Best Foreign Language Film and earned nominations for Best Director and Best Actress (Michelle Yeoh).

BAFTA Awards (2001): Won Best Film Not in the English Language and received other nominations.

The film was a commercial success, grossing over \$213 million worldwide, and received praise for introducing martial arts cinema to a broader audience. (Baidu Baike, n.d.)

Let the Bullets Fly

Film Synopsis

Let the Bullets Fly (2010), directed by Jiang Wen, is a Chinese action-comedy film that combines elements of political satire, dark humor, and the Western genre. Set in the 1920s during the Warlord Era of China, the film follows Zhang Mazi (played by Jiang Wen), a bandit who, after robbing a train, assumes the role of the newly appointed governor of a town named Goose Town. Zhang Mazi plans to take control of the town's wealth, but he must face off against the corrupt and powerful landlord Huang Silang (played by Chow Yun-fat), who already rules the town.

The film's plot revolves around a power struggle between Zhang Mazi and Huang Silang, with both characters engaging in a battle of wits, manipulation, and deception.

The film critiques social and political issues of the era, such as corruption, inequality, and the manipulation of power. Known for its absurd humor and sharp political satire,

Let the Bullets Fly uses clever dialogue, fast-paced action, and dark humor to entertain

while also delivering critical commentary on the socio-political landscape of China during the Warlord Era.

Cast and Crew

Director: Jiang Wen, a renowned Chinese filmmaker and actor, known for his distinctive filmmaking style that blends dark humor, satire, and social critique.

Cast:

Jiang Wen as Zhang Mazi, the bandit leader who impersonates the governor of Goose Town to control its wealth and power.

Chow Yun-fat as Huang Silang, the powerful and corrupt landlord who rules Goose Town, engaging in a power struggle with Zhang Mazi.

Ge You as Ma Bangde, a former playwright turned county magistrate. He is appointed as the governor of six counties, including Goose Town, but is captured by Zhang Mazi. In an attempt to avoid being killed, Ma pretends to be Tang, a fictional character, and navigates between Zhang Mazi and Huang Silang to survive.

Awards and Recognition

Let the Bullets Fly was a significant box office success, grossing over ¥700 million (approximately \$100 million USD) in China, making it one of the highest-grossing Chinese films of 2010. The film was praised for its sharp wit, clever political satire, and strong performances. It also received recognition in the Chinese film industry, including several nominations at prestigious film festivals and award ceremonies.

Although the film did not win major international awards, it received widespread acclaim in China and among international critics for its innovative storytelling and bold approach to social commentary. It remains one of Jiang Wen's most commercially successful and influential films. (Baidu Baike, n.d.)

The role of cinematic techniques in shaping the audience experience is crucial. It not only touches on the storytelling aspect but also creates a strong emotional connection between the filmmaker and the audience. This connection immerses the audience in the world of the film. In Chinese commercial films, the use of film technology is a key factor in creating a compelling film experience and attracting audiences. The importance of cinematic techniques is reflected in various aspects. First, it has the power to influence the emotional resonance of the audience. Carefully crafted plot and character development allow filmmakers to evoke empathy and emotional involvement in their audiences, allowing them to connect with the film's characters and story (Yang, 2017).

Additionally, the use of cinematic techniques is crucial to conveying the message. In the field of filmmaking, narrative strategy is a means of conveying cultural, social, and political messages and prompting the audience to think critically. As a cultural channel, Chinese commercial films not only provide entertainment but also become a tool to express social values and contemporary opinions. In addition, cinematic techniques also have a profound impact on the artistic creativity of films (Shu, 2018). Filmmakers can use innovative narrative methods, break away from traditional story structures, and open

up new narrative avenues. This creative film technique often sets a film apart, winning recognition and praise from audiences and critics alike.

The cinematic techniques employed by a director play an important role in shaping the innovation and imagination of a film. Famous Chinese director Zhang Yimou emphasized the importance of these technologies to the success of films. In his view, it is more than just storytelling; it is a means of creating an emotional connection and engaging an audience. Zhang Yimou's films often emphasize emotional complexity and character growth (Zhen, 2012).

1.3 Statement of The Problem

The concept of cinematic techniques is important to both academia and industry. Each film has its unique shooting techniques. The screenwriter tells the story through words, while the director presents the story through visual images and music. Each of them employs different techniques of storytelling and visual depiction. This is what we call cinematic techniques. In recent years, Chinese commercial films have attracted much attention on the international stage, and their unique narrative methods, rich cultural connotations, and innovations in technical techniques have become hot spots for research. Against this background, this study selected two representative works, "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" directed by Ang Lee, and "Let the Bullets Fly" directed by Jiang Wen. It aims to provide an in-depth analysis of their similarities and differences in film technical techniques, directorial style, and presentation of cultural elements. Existing research still has limited discussion on the specific film techniques

used in these films and their artistic and commercial expressions. In particular, in terms of the comprehensive introduction and induction of Chinese film techniques, many literatures fail to fully explore the technical dimensions of these works.

How to compare the film techniques, including photography, editing, sound effects, etc., in "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" and "Let the Bullets Fly" to reveal the significant differences and commonalities between them? Past research has provided very limited technical analysis of Chinese commercial films. Previous scholars such as Yang Shu, 2017 analyzed narrative techniques in "Research on Film Narrative in Mainland China since the New Era", but she analyzed film research since the film entered China. At present, the introduction and enumeration of shooting techniques of Chinese commercial films are very limited, and the analysis periods are also different. With the development of time, from 2000 to today, few people has filled this gap in analyzing and researching topics related to Chinese commercial cinematic techniques. Therefore, this study fills the knowledge gap on the film methods available for commercial films in China's new era.

What are the similarities and differences in the presentation of cinematic techniques between the two films? How do they show the unique charm of Chinese culture through cinematic techniques? Some scholars study the narrative techniques of Western films, such as Wei Xiaoguai,2021, but but only a few people have studied which cinematic techniques are used in Chinese commercial films, and which ones are the most important popular technique. The findings can provide filmmakers with suggestions on

how to better apply cinematic techniques to create successful commercial films. This has practical significance for film industry practitioners. Therefore, this study will also understand which cinematic techniques are most suitable for Chinese commercial films.

In a field with cultural, economic, and social influence such as Chinese commercial film. Without relevant research, the film industry may miss the opportunity to understand and grasp the development trends and opportunities in China's commercial film field. This could create a competitive disadvantage for filmmakers, production companies, and those working in the film industry. This can lead to a decrease in the quality of the film as a result of the filmmakers not fully understanding the needs of the audience, resulting in lower audience satisfaction. Without understanding market trends and competition, movie studios may lose their position in a competitive market, which may negatively impact the industry. Without relevant research, the film industry may lose opportunities and challenges in various aspects. Moreover, cinematic techniques significantly influence the representation and preservation of Chinese culture in films. These techniques can enhance the portrayal of cultural narratives, making them more compelling and accessible to both domestic and international audiences. Through an in-depth comparison of the two films "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" and "Let the Bullets Fly", this study aims to analyze the application of cinematic techniques in the two films and reveal their similarities and differences in cinematic techniques, and the impact of the use of these cinematic techniques,

The research results of this paper may have a certain impact on the production and creative direction of Chinese commercial films. By analyzing the use and effects of different film technologies, we can provide inspiration and guidance for filmmakers and promote the diverse and innovative development of Chinese film culture, discuss about their cultural impact. To make up for the lack of systematic research and in-depth discussion on the specific application of Chinese commercial film techniques. This study will fill this gap and comprehensively analyze the application of these film techniques in the Chinese film era.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the elements of differences and similarities between the cinematic techniques in "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" and "*Let the Bullets Fly*"?
2. What influence of cinematic techniques in "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" and "*Let the Bullets Fly*" have on Chinese modern cinema?

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To identify the differences and similarities between the cinematic techniques of "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" and "*Let the Bullets Fly*".
2. To discuss the influence of cinematic techniques in "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" and "*Let the Bullets Fly*" on Chinese modern cinema.

1.6 Significance of Study

The theme of this study, which is a comparative analysis of the film technical techniques of two Chinese commercial films, "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" and "*Let the Bullets Fly*", has important academic and practical significance. By in-depth study of these two representative commercial films, we can provide a comprehensive understanding of the artistic development and production level of Chinese commercial films. This has a positive significance for expanding the academic field of research on Chinese films, especially the expression, and innovation of commercial films.

Moreover, the significance of this study is to provide academics with an in-depth understanding of Chinese commercial films, provide practical guidance to film practitioners, and promote the development of Chinese commercial films on the international stage. By analyzing the production details and influencing factors of the two films, this study provides useful insights into the future development of Chinese commercial films.

1.7 Scope of Study

This study mainly conducts a comparative analysis of the film technology of two films, "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" directed by Ang Lee, and "*Let the Bullets Fly*" directed by Jiang Wen. This study mainly examines the artistic and commercial aspects of these films, including their narrative structure, and visual style, and the most important aspect of focus is the application and analysis of cinematic techniques in the

two films. The analysis will be limited to material related to these two films and will primarily consider the cinematic techniques employed by the directors.

1.8 Limitations of Study

While this study provides valuable insights into the cinematic techniques of “*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*” and “*Let the Bullets Fly*”, some limitations should be acknowledged. First, obtaining comprehensive and detailed data for both films presented challenges, particularly in terms of behind-the-scenes information. Furthermore, the study focused on Chinese sources and may have overlooked critical perspectives raised in non-Chinese reviews or analyses. Furthermore, the analysis limited by the researcher's interpretive perspective, introducing subjectivity into the evaluation of artistic elements. Finally, the focus of this study is to analyze the similarities and differences in the application of film technology in the two works, and cannot provide more information other than the analysis of film technology application.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comparative study that explores the similarities and differences in cinematic techniques between *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Let the Bullets Fly*. The aim is to analyze how the distinct cinematic techniques used in these films contribute to their unique elements in film art and production. By focusing on key variables such as mise-en-scène, set design, lighting, sound design, and composition, this research investigates how these techniques overlap and diverge in their application.

The study is motivated by a growing interest in the diversity of Chinese commercial film art and a deep appreciation for the work of directors Ang Lee and Jiang Wen. A qualitative, comparative methodology is employed to explore the cultural and aesthetic representations embedded in these iconic films. The chapter provides an overview of both old and new Chinese cinema, cinematic techniques, and the selected films, exploring how they reflect Chinese culture through film. Ultimately, the goal is to deepen the understanding of how these techniques are applied in the films, shedding light on their role in conveying distinctive aspects of Chinese culture and aesthetics in modern cinema.

2.2 Chinese Old and New Films

Chinese cinema boasts a rich history and has undergone significant changes over the years. Jia (2022) suggests that the distinction between old and new Chinese films is

typically based on the historical development stages of the film industry. Old Chinese films primarily refer to works from the early stages of the industry, including the period before the founding of the People's Republic of China and the early years following its establishment, up to the 1970s. During this period, Chinese cinema played a crucial role in promoting revolutionary and socialist ideals, with many films focusing on political themes (Dai, 1995). Despite the technological and resource limitations of the early period, Huang (2023) argues that early Chinese films creatively addressed the needs of the people, using dialogue, sound effects, and ethnic music to enhance the atmosphere and narrate realistic stories, reflecting societal issues in a vivid manner.

New Chinese films, referring to those produced after the economic reforms starting in 1978, marked a new era for the industry. The policy of reform and opening-up provided new opportunities for development, and the industry gradually recovered, aligning with international standards. Chinese cinema began to integrate foreign films, technologies, and production concepts. Moreover, some Chinese films achieved success on the global stage (Leilei, 2022). Shen (2022) notes that the new wave of Chinese films has made significant achievements in both domestic and international communication, with China becoming the second-largest film market globally. Dai (2022) emphasizes that contemporary Chinese films are transforming the nation's film aesthetics, incorporating new cinematic techniques and achieving global recognition.

2.3 Cinematic Techniques

Cinematic techniques, as defined by Yang (2017), refer to the various tools filmmakers use to convey narratives, emotions, and themes. These include visual techniques like camera angles, lighting, and composition, as well as audio elements such as sound effects and music. The mastery of these techniques allows filmmakers to create films that resonate emotionally with the audience, making them both immersive and engaging. Adorama (2022) emphasizes that cinematic techniques go beyond technical proficiency—they are the essence of visual storytelling, determining not only what the audience sees but how they experience the film's narrative.

One key cinematic concept is *mise-en-scène*, which refers to the arrangement of visual elements within the frame. This includes the setting, lighting, actors' positioning, and props, all of which contribute to the film's narrative and emotional tone (Jesse, 2023). As early as the 20th century, scholars like Hugo Munsterberg explored how film projection interacts with audience psychology, asserting that *mise-en-scène* is a critical tool for shaping audience perception. Shuying (2018) further expands this concept by noting that *mise-en-scène*'s narrative function extends beyond the visual; it encompasses the emotional and thematic dimensions conveyed through the interaction of characters, music, and dialogue.

2.4 "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"

Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is a film that beautifully blends martial arts with deep philosophical and cultural themes. According to Deng Junpeng (2021),

the film employs a unique directorial style that combines stunning visuals with complex character development. Yang Wen (2022) argues that *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is one of Ang Lee's masterpieces, representing a critical intersection of traditional Chinese culture and international cinema. The film's use of national music and traditional aesthetics, as noted by Hui Gongjian (2010), significantly contributes to its emotional resonance and global appeal.

The film integrates elements of Chinese philosophical thought, particularly from Laozi and Zhuangzi, to explore themes of freedom, morality, and destiny. Zeng Yaonong (2023) observes that the philosophical concepts of "Tao" permeate the narrative, particularly through the character arcs of Yu Jiaolong and Li Mubai, whose internal struggles mirror the broader conflict between nature and human desires. Wang Yidi (2017) highlights how the film blends action with literature, achieving a balance between kinetic beauty and poetic stillness, which is a hallmark of traditional Chinese aesthetics.

Another key element of the film's success is its visual language, particularly in the martial arts scenes. Wang Hewen (2024) points out that the film's choreography often evokes the fluid, freehand style of traditional Chinese ink paintings, which enhances the visual storytelling and emotional impact. Pan Qi (2024) discusses how *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* succeeds in balancing Chinese cultural elements with Western cinematic norms, making it universally appealing while maintaining its Chinese identity.

2.5 " Let The Bullet Fly"

Let the Bullets Fly represents a different approach to Chinese cinema, one that blends political satire, dark humor, and action. As Xing Zhou (2012) notes, the film uses metaphors and absurd narratives to convey deeper socio-political messages. Through exaggerated dialogue and improbable scenarios, the film critiques social injustices while keeping the audience engaged with its entertaining style. Qu Dianyue (2012) suggests that the film's success lies in its bold use of humor and metaphor, which add layers of meaning to its narrative, allowing viewers to reflect on the broader implications of the story.

The film's lens language, as analyzed by Yang Yuzhu (2021), is marked by its strong personal style and imaginative imagery, creating a distinct atmosphere that allows the audience to overlook the film's narrative absurdities. The high-speed editing and rapid camera movements contribute to the film's kinetic energy, heightening its visual appeal (Zhang Lijuan, 2012).

Furthermore, *Let the Bullets Fly* is notable for its portrayal of female characters, such as Sister Hua and the county magistrate's wife, whose complex roles leave a strong impression on the audience (Tu Changqing, 2016). The political metaphors in the film, as explored by Yuan Yuan (2015), critique the ongoing social and political dynamics in China, symbolized by the characters of Zhang Mazi and Huang Silang, who represent revolution and the old guard, respectively.

2.6 Summary

In summary, the existing literature on old and new Chinese films allows the author to have a better understand the differences between old and new Chinese films, while articles on the concepts of cinematic techniques are crucial to understanding the art and production of films. "Mise-en-scene" considered as an important aspect of filmmaking and involves the arrangement of visual elements in front of the camera. The literature related to the two films "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" and "*Let the Bullets Fly*" more about the selection and analysis of cinematic techniques. However, it is important to recognize the limitations inherent in this study, stemming primarily from the breadth and depth of available academic resources. Together, these studies contribute to our understanding of the cinematic techniques employed in "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*", and "*Let the Bullets Fly*". The subsequent sections will further synthesize these findings to draw overall conclusions regarding the comparative film analysis of these two iconic Chinese commercial films.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study adopted a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is suitable for exploring the depth and richness of the subject matter, providing an in-depth understanding of film technology in the context of Chinese commercial films. It focuses on the qualitative analysis of the cinematic techniques of these two films, including the director's cinematic technique choices, storyline, character creation, etc. The author uses comparative research, textual analysis.

Comparative research is the study of similarities and differences between two or more cases. A comparative research design was used to explore in-depth the similarities and differences between the two films on both an artistic and commercial level by comparing different aspects of them (Heclo & Adams, 1983).

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Textual analysis

Textual analysis typically refers to the in-depth and systematic examination and interpretation of textual content. This type of analysis can be applied across various research fields and methodologies, with the primary goal of understanding the meaning, structure, language use, themes, emotions, or other relevant aspects of the text (Jack Caulfield, 2019). Information about the two films collected through textual materials

such as viewing notes, film reviews, and interviews with the directors. In films, text elements can include dialogue, scripts, subtitles, slogans, scene settings, etc.

Textual analysis can be used to focus on the scene setting of the movie, including location, time, and environment. Understand how scenes serve the narrative and emotional needs of the film through analysis of textual descriptions. It is also analyze the film's script to understand the storyline, character traits, and emotional expression through a detailed study of dialogue and description. As well as text descriptions of visual elements, the visual elements in the movie, such as scenes, costumes, props, etc., converted into text descriptions. Analyze these textual descriptions to reveal their role in the film and how they interrelate to the storyline and themes. There is also the analysis of language and symbols, which analyzes the language and symbols used in the film, including slogans, logos, words, etc., to understand their symbolic meanings and metaphors in the film. Look for metaphors and symbols that may be present in the film and analyze their meaning and role in the story. Consider whether there are hidden meanings and layers of interpretation in the film. And so on, using textual analysis methods to dig deeper into various textual elements in the film to reveal their deeper meanings and how they contribute to the overall experience of the film.

3.2.2 Justification of Film Samples

In selecting the films for analysis, careful consideration was given to their relevance and significance within the context of the topic. The chosen films, "*Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*" and "*Let the Bullets Fly*," offer many perspectives on the use of cinematic

techniques in Chinese commercial films. The decision to include these specific examples is grounded in several factors: Both films directly address the central theme of Chinese commercial films. Their narratives, characters, and visual elements contribute significantly to exploring this theme. *"Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon"* and *"Let the Bullets Fly"* are celebrated for their cinematic excellence. From cinematography and sound design to storytelling techniques, these films showcase exemplary craftsmanship, providing rich material for analysis. Both films are considered masterpieces of Chinese cinema. *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* has achieved great success internationally and has become a pioneering work of Chinese films that has attracted widespread attention around the world. *"Let the Bullets Fly"* has won praise at home and abroad for its unique black humor and narrative style. Choosing these two films for comparison provides a challenging and diverse case for research and helps gain a deeper understanding of cinematic techniques in Chinese commercial films.

Although *"Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon"* and *"Let the Bullets Fly"* are two very successful Chinese commercial films, each film has its unique strengths and weaknesses.

Here are some possible pros and cons that both movies have in common:

Strong artistic expression: Both films were notable successes in their artistic expression.

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" won praise for its superb martial arts scenes and visual effects, while *"Let the Bullets Fly"* demonstrated the director's creativity through black comedy and unique narrative style.

International influence: Both films have achieved success in the international market and established a good image for Chinese commercial films on the international stage. Their international influence is a testament to the maturity and global recognition of the Chinese film industry.

Cinematic Excellence: Both films are celebrated for their outstanding cinematic craftsmanship. *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* is renowned for its breathtaking cinematography, choreographed action sequences, and the seamless integration of traditional Chinese aesthetics with modern filmmaking techniques. In contrast, *"Let the Bullets Fly"* is praised for its innovative narrative structure, witty dialogue, and the effective use of black humor. These elements make both films exemplary models for analyzing different approaches to storytelling, visual style, and the integration of cultural elements into cinema.

Contrasting Themes and Techniques: The two films also provide a diverse range of themes and cinematic techniques that are crucial for a comprehensive analysis. While *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* focuses on themes of honor, love, and destiny within a historical context, *"Let the Bullets Fly"* offers a more modern critique of power and corruption through its fast-paced, satirical narrative. This thematic diversity allows for a more nuanced exploration of how different genres and storytelling approaches can be utilized within Chinese commercial films to engage and resonate with audiences.

In conclusion, the selection of "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" and "*Let the Bullets Fly*" as the focal points of this analysis is well-justified given their profound impact on Chinese cinema and their embodiment of diverse cinematic techniques. These films not only represent the artistic and commercial successes of Chinese films on both domestic and international stages, but they also offer rich material for analyzing the balance between cultural authenticity and global appeal. While each film presents its own set of complexities, these very challenges enhance their value as subjects of study, providing a comprehensive lens through which to examine the evolution and craft of Chinese commercial filmmaking.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

3.3.1 Mise-en-scène

Mise-en-scène refers to the stage design and arrangement of actors in scenes for a theatre or film production (Merriam-Webster, 2020), both in the visual arts through storyboarding, visual theme, and cinematography, and in narrative storytelling through direction. The term is also commonly used to refer to single scenes that are representative of a film. The key aspects of this concept are Set design, Lighting, Space, Composition, Costume, Makeup and hairstyles, Acting, Film, and Actor blocking (Merriam-Webster, 2020)

The use of mise-en-scène is significant as it allows the director to convey messages to the viewer through what is placed in the scene, not just the content of the scene.

Mise-en-scène allows the director to not only convey their message but also to

implement their aesthetic; as such, each director has their own unique mise-en-scène. Mise-en-scène refers to everything in front of the camera, including the set design, lighting, and actors, and the ultimate way that these elements influence how the scene comes together for the audience (Jesse, 2023).

By applying the mise-en-scène concept to the research design, a deeper and more detailed analysis of the two films can be carried out, because this concept is so consistent with our analysis of the differences and analysis of the film techniques of the two films. The concept of each aspect can be mapped to a specific project to be analyzed in this paper. Understand how these cinematic techniques emotionally impact, convey meaning, or contribute to the film as a whole.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the author aims to identify the similarities and differences in the cinematic techniques of *"Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon"* and *"Let the Bullets Fly,"* explore the influence of these techniques, and analyze their impact on Chinese culture.

4.2 "Introduction To "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"

"Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon" is a 2000 Chinese martial arts film directed by Ang Lee, with Yuan Heping serving as the action director. It is based on the martial arts novel *"Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon"* by (Wang Dulu, 1941), and stars Chow Yun-fat, Michelle Yeoh, Zhang Ziyi, and Chang Chen. The film's story describes the grievances and hatreds surrounding the Qingming Sword in the martial arts world, with themes of chivalry interspersed throughout. In addition to highlighting the profoundness of Chinese martial arts, it also includes the love and affection among the characters in the martial arts world. The entire film was shot in Hongcun, Yi County, Huangshan City, Anhui Province, capturing traditional Chinese architecture and natural scenery, and combining it with magnificent martial arts movements, turning the infinite imagination of the martial arts world into real images.

"Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon" has won wide acclaim for its exquisite martial arts design, beautiful cinematography, and profound emotional portrayal of characters.

The film not only shows the magnificence and danger of the world of martial arts but

also explores the complex relationships between personal freedom, responsibility, and love.

In this chapter, the author will analyze the film techniques of "*Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*" from the following aspects: set design, lighting, composition, costume, acting, and soundtrack. Through these analyses, the author will explore the similarities and differences between "*Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*" and "*Let the Bullets Fly*" in terms of film techniques, the influence of these techniques on Chinese modern cinema.

4.2.1 Analysis of Cinematic Techniques In "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"

In analyzing the film "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*", this section will focus on six core cinematic techniques: set design, lighting, composition, costume, acting, and soundtrack. These techniques not only serve as the foundational elements of the film's visual and auditory narrative but also play an essential role in intensifying narrative tension, conveying cultural significance. The meticulous set design and costume choices reconstruct an idealized historical setting, creating a distinct Eastern aesthetic space. Lighting and composition, through refined use of contrasts and spatial structures, heighten the film's emotional tension and visual depth, imbuing scenes with symbolic resonance. At the same time, the actors' performances, through controlled physicality and expressive depth, precisely convey the characters' internal conflicts, enriching the film's psychological tension and narrative depth. The soundtrack, as an auditory element, harmonizes with the visual language, both enhancing the film's emotional atmosphere and aligning seamlessly with its thematic explorations. The choice to

analyze these six techniques is based on their interconnected roles in shaping the film's style, cultural expression, and emotional resonance, forming a cohesive artistic whole. Through an in-depth exploration of these techniques, this study aims to reveal the unique applications of cinematic language in *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"*, examining their impact and analyzing their influence on Chinese cultural representation.

4.2.1.1 Set design

"A true art always has a spiritual core as a support, which allows it to withstand the test of time and exude eternal charm. For movies, the "absolute value scale and eternal truth of the spirit" that supports its existence is poetry." (Yang Mei, 2018). From this perspective, the pursuit of poetry in martial arts movies is the pursuit of the artistic nature and value truth of martial arts movies. In fact, any life will produce poetry, and any art will more or less carry poetry, and the presentation of the poetic process of martial arts movies must be related to their scene arrangement. From the perspective of the "objects" in the entire movie, the ancient Hui-style architecture, the utopian water town (movie still 05:52), the ancient city wall with a long history (movie still 06:09), and the bamboo sea (movie stills 01:36:29 & 01:37:10) are combined in this film. They exist independently and individually affect the artistic conception of the entire picture and set the atmosphere. They are also linked layer by layer and work together in this film, creating subtle relationships and triggering associations. These "objects" give people a feeling of simplicity and purity, which is very similar to the characteristics of Chinese ink painting, where the virtual and the real coexist and the artistic conception is rich. Therefore, these images are like a static and dynamic ink painting. When combined

together, they form a poetic and picturesque picture with the essential attributes of the film.

This combination of 'images' can not only enrich imagination but also conform to the ideal concept of poetic aesthetics emphasized in Chinese painting. Through the presentation of 'images,' the 'objects' in the mind of the film director are conveyed through the 'image' of art. In this way, the 'images' in the film are not limited to the appearance of the scenery itself but also carry certain symbolic meanings. In the movie *"Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon,"* the Qingming Sword is not only a symbol of identity but also a symbol of grievances in the martial arts world, a symbol of spiritual realm, and a symbol of attitude towards life. As we all know, there is another wonderful scene in the movie *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* where "images" participate in the poetic display. Li Mubai and Yu Jiaolong fight in the bamboo forest, with swaying bamboo branches, fresh and elegant bamboo leaves, sharp swords, and simple white clothes. These tangible visual images are arranged and combined together, and the calm demeanor is integrated with the swaying bamboo forest, symbolizing the free and easy mind and noble character of the hero, successfully realizing the poetic presentation of the blending of people and scenery, feelings and scenery, and giving people endless reverie. The "object image" on the screen participates in the poetic expression, internalizing the symbolic meaning into the inner charm of martial arts movies, establishing the literary heritage of martial arts movies, and excavating the connotation of Chinese spiritual culture and human nature. Through poetic expression, it excavates the positive factors such as ideals, heroism, and tenacity hidden in human nature, and at

the same time calls for the existence of truth, goodness, and beauty. “This not only reflects humanitarianism, but also reflects the core of the Chinese national spirit.” (Yang Mei, 2018)



Figure 4.1 Ang Lee. (Director). (2000). Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, [Film 06:09].



Figure 4.2 Ang Lee. (Director). (2000). Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, [Film 05:52].



Figure 4.3 Ang Lee. (Director). (2000). *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, [Film 01:36:29].



Figure 4.4 Ang Lee. (Director). (2000). *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, [Film 01:37:10].

As for the traditional oriental aesthetics shown in the scene creation of "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*", in terms of martial arts, the film mainly depicts light kung fu. Qinggong is a type of traditional Chinese martial arts, which has been exaggerated in film and television works. Compared with Kung Fu on the ground, Qing Kung Fu is more romantic and embodies a soft, light and elegant visual effect. Qinggong represents flying. There is a deep attachment to flying in traditional Chinese culture. For example, Chang'e flying to the moon and the flying sky in Dunhuang murals all show the

ancients' preference and yearning for flying. Ang Lee chose Hongcun, Anhui, as the filming location. Hongcun is a famous water town in China.

The simple buildings and gurgling water present ink paintings with Chinese characteristics. The action scene between Yu Jiaolong and Li Mubai takes place in the Bamboo Sea. This sequence fully reflects the oriental aesthetics in the film. The greenness of the bamboo sea, the flexibility of the bamboo poles, and the whirling of the bamboo leaves create a romantic atmosphere for this fight. Yu Jiaolong and Li Mubai, dressed in white, flew through the sea of bamboo, agile and light, adding the beauty of Chinese dance to the fierce fight. The variability of the bamboo sea makes the two people present a static and dynamic confrontation. The static confrontation is that the two people stand on the same curved bamboo pole.

At this time, there was a clear contrast between the two people's images. Yu Jiaolong looked nervous and his legs were bent; on the contrary, Li Mubai was calm and relaxed, as tall and straight as a pine tree. This also fully reflects that although Yu Jiaolong holds the Qingming Sword, he is still no match for Li Mubai, echoing the Taoist belief that inner Qi is greater than outer form. The dynamic confrontation appears in the process of Li Mubai chasing Yu Jiaolong. As the bamboo pole dances, Li Mubai goes down and Yu Jiaolong goes up. The director gave close shots of the two of them. A few strands of Yu Jiaolong's hair blocked her face, and there were a few bamboo leaves in front of Li Mubai. These obstructions created a hazy artistic conception for the picture. It is also consistent with the state of the two of them observing each other from a distance and

constantly testing each other's true intentions. In this fight scene, the two rarely had close fights with each other. They only used objects to attack each other. Even if they did come into contact, they separated quickly. This kind of action design expands the movement space of each of the two people, allowing the aesthetic significance of Qinggong to be more fully demonstrated. The visual effects of the action scenes in Bamboo Sea are excellent. In addition to the excitement of the fighting, the beauty and hazy atmosphere of the dance are added.

4.2.1.2 Lighting

“Film is an art of light and shadow modeling. The quality of a film is closely related to the quality of light and shadow. "Light and shadow modeling is a basic means of film modeling” (Xu Nanming, 1986). It can enhance the spatial sense of the picture, enrich the tone level of the picture, express the three-dimensional shape and surface structure of the subject, and can also be used as part of the composition. It uses light and shadow to balance the picture, express a specific environment, and enrich the visual image of the picture. It can also use light and shadow to form mood, atmosphere, time concept, etc. according to the plot of the film" (Xu Nanming, 1986). Finding the agility between light and shadow is an indispensable means of poetic expression in martial arts movies. Light and shadow elements modify time and space, forming an internalized artistic conception. It is true that different movies and different directors have different light and shadow performances, and the temperament of artistic conception performance is also different. Even if it is the same story, the light and shadow methods used are different, and the narrative of the movie can express different poetry. The same is true

for martial arts movies. Different types of martial arts movies use different light and shadow expression methods, and the atmosphere quality formed is also different.

The martial arts movie *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* directed by Ang Lee has a smooth, soft, delicate, and layered tone, expressing a feeling of freehand life. The use of light and shadow narration, modeling, and lyrical decoration permeates the entire film *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* directed by Ang Lee. Different scenes, different storylines, and paragraphs have different light and shadow changes. In the constant changes of light and shadow, exquisite pictures are presented, which give people a deep impression. In general, the movie *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* uses high-brightness and brightness of color light to make the light and shadow effects of the entire film distinct, basically presenting the temperament beauty of fresh and elegant Chinese ink painting.



Figure 4.5 Ang Lee. (Director). (2000). Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, [Film 63:05-68:09].

However, there are also very few scenes that use different color light processing. In the movie "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*", there is such a scene where Yu Jiaolong and Luo Xiaohu meet and live together. The effect of light and shadow application from 63:05 to 68:09 in the film is very different from that in other places (movie picture, 63:05 to 68:09). First of all, in terms of the space modified by light and shadow, the tones of the indoor environment and outdoor environment where Luo Xiaohu lives are modified by light and shadow effects. In the room where he lives, the director uses orange-red warm light to express the indoor environment, which seems to be depicting a life scene, and it is also like a Western oil painting, gorgeous and ambiguous. In the outdoor environment where they live, although some orange-red warm light is also used, the overall tone is still different.

The endless desert and the hero and heroine who ride hand in hand to the end of the world are stained with a warm light red, conveying a texture beauty and emotional beauty, presenting a picture of infinite beauty of sunset, leaving people with unlimited imagination. This treatment, the light and shadow are blurred, dreamy, warm and sexy, showing the poetic beauty of love, and has the poetic color of Western romantic paintings. Through the contrast between the light outdoors and the dark indoors, time and space are compressed, and a vague and ambiguous emotion comes to the face; secondly, from the perspective of light and shadow to shape the characters, the use of warm light makes the facial lines and the lines of the whole body of Yu Jiaolong soft, full, and rich in texture, especially the treatment of Yu Jiaolong's facial lines, which

better expresses Yu Jiaolong's feminine beauty and feminine charm, enriching and plumping Yu Jiaolong's character image.

The use of warm light to modify Luo Xiaohu's facial and body contours makes the tough male contours smooth. This performance shows the tenderness and delicacy of Luo Xiaohu, a tough man who has lived in the desert since childhood. Luo Xiaohu's character image is more three-dimensional, cute and vivid, with the poetic beauty of humanity. Although the light and shadow performance here is different from the light and shadow treatment of Chinese ink paintings presented in the whole film, this treatment does not seem abrupt. On the contrary, the overall effect of the film presents an extremely tolerant sentiment and unparalleled poetry.

4.2.1.3 Composition

“Film composition mainly refers to the layout and overall planning of objects in the film screen, which is the focus of the beauty of film art form. The composition thinking and methods of martial arts movies are influenced by the composition concept of Chinese landscape painting and the structure of Chinese classical gardens, which makes martial arts movies exude a different flavor.” (Yang Mei, 2018) The composition in Chinese landscape painting emphasizes following the laws of nature and the dialectical and unified thinking method. The composition of Chinese landscape painting pays attention to the use of the law of unity of opposites, which is specifically reflected in the form of density, gathering and dispersion, hiding and revealing, distance, virtuality and reality, balance, black and white, opening and closing, echoing, host and guest, size and other

relationships. Only by unifying and balancing these opposing relationships in the picture can a good composition be completed, so that the film presents a visual effect of combining movement and stillness, virtuality and reality, and conveys a poetic effect and artistic conception.

The composition of Chinese landscape painting also pays attention to the composition method of "leaving blank space". Specifically, "leaving blank space" refers to the place where the brush and ink are not touched. Although there is no brush and ink, the places with brush and ink in the painting and the blank places are naturally integrated to generate poetry. "Blank space" does not mean nothing, but the "nothingness" advocated by Taoism. It is this kind of "blank space" that gives birth to infinite attributes, making the viewer excited and full of thoughts, thus reaching an infinite state of freedom. Among Chinese classical arts, the most prominent art form is the construction of Chinese classical gardens.

It is about using frames to construct different spaces, or deliberately emphasizing a specific space to strengthen the narrative, so as to express emotions. In other words, different frames can create different spatial hierarchies, and ultimately the spatial hierarchies are clear and transparent, achieving the artistic expression effect of virtuality and reality.

Because movies are a kind of "moving images", their pictures are always in motion, but in the flow of time, how to achieve visual pleasure and convey the creative intention

through the layout and arrangement of each part of each frame is an artistic problem that every director must consider. Faced with this extremely challenging problem, many film directors have burst out with amazing imagination and creativity, and have dedicated many film works with exquisite composition to the world. Among them, "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" directed by Ang Lee is the most prominent.

At the end of the film "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*", the scene where Yu Jiaolong jumps off a cliff to commit suicide fully uses the law of unity of opposites and "white space" in the composition of Chinese landscape painting (movie picture, 01:54:50). The distant mountains and the Taoist buildings, cliffs, and people in the near distance echo each other, the fog in the foreground and the main figure in the background, that is, Yu Jiaolong, are virtual and real, vaguely, layered, and repeatedly superimposed, but there is also emptiness in the superposition, the scenery is real but the meaning is virtual, real but not blocked, breathable, and the empty places are also expressed reasonably. Qing Da Zhong Guang said:

"The virtual and the real complement each other, and the unpainted places are all wonderful." (Yu Jianhua, 2000) It is like in the illusory and ever-changing martial arts world, Yu Jiaolong jumped off the cliff, traveling between reality and fantasy, to find the utopia in her dream. The use of such a composition method to express Yu Jiaolong's death adds to the poetic expression of the film, making Yu Jiaolong's death confusing. It is covered with a poetic and mysterious veil. Such a death not only presents no blood or violence at all, but also conveys the idea that she is not dead, but lives in another way,

fully expressing the aesthetic idea of 'harmony between man and nature' advocated by Taoism, and also playing a finishing touch to the whole film.

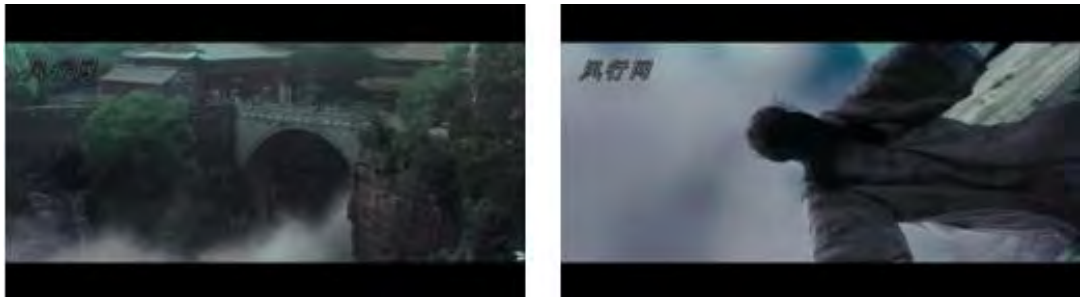


Figure 4.6 Ang Lee. (Director). (2000). *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, [Film 01:54:50].

Different frame compositions create different spaces, which naturally produce different fun. These frame compositions can be doors and windows, corners, or even a tree. Frame composition can create a state of "endless words and infinite meaning". This form of artistic expression essentially reflects the restraint and implicit poetry of oriental culture, and the frame plot contained in this composition method is the circuitous and graceful poetic beauty of "holding the pipa half-covered". As a young art, film actively absorbs nutrients from Chinese classical art forms in order to make continuous breakthroughs and internalizes them into its own audio-visual language. This reference and internalization have corresponding comparisons in many movies. For example, in the martial arts film "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*", the aesthetics of Chinese classical garden design are permeated, and the door frame and window frame composition are cleverly borrowed to create an atmosphere while expressing the emotional characteristics of the characters (movie picture, 11:35). The former uses the door frame of the ancient building to compose the picture, connecting the reality of the

foreground figure with the virtuality of the courtyard in the background, achieving the artistic conception of the coexistence of reality and virtuality, and expressing Yu Xiulian's inner depression and forbearance. The latter uses the window of the carriage as the foreground for composition. The window frame here acts as a medium between the carriage and the desert, showing Yu Jiaolong's inner helplessness and desire. Although the two are in different spaces, both use frame composition to make the space transparent and tactful. Both use framed scenes to connect different picture spaces. This approach can not only achieve the echo of the front and back pictures, but also express special emotions.



Figure 4.7 Ang Lee. (Director). (2000). *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, [Film 11:36].

4.2.1.4 Costumes

The overall costume style of the movie "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" focuses on smoothness, naturalness, and no traces, but it contains the ambiguous characteristics of modernism. On the one hand, it pays tribute to Chinese classicism, and on the other hand, it creates a texture of details in art films. In the film, in order to correspond to the infinite green bamboo forest, Ye Jintian (the costume designer of the film) designed two light and elegant character shapes. Li Mubai and Yu Jiaolong wore colorless beige

clothes and shuttled through the bamboo sea all over the mountains, which was the peak of the image accumulation of the entire film.



Figure 4.8 Ang Lee. (Director). (2000). *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, [Film 01:37:12].

Li Mubai, the soul of "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*", his image is hidden in a kind of turbulent undercurrent. On the one hand, he hopes for stability, and on the other hand, he has different ideas. It can be seen that when designing Li Mubai's shape in the movie, Ye Jintian used the overall "shape" to reveal his characteristics, rather than presenting it with the details of the body. Ye Jintian gave him a simple image, but created a kind of spirit, so his clothes always look the same, with a modern decorativeness, which is a kind of alienation effect. His image is not very clear, you can always see this person, but you can't see it clearly.



Figure 4.9 Ang Lee. (Director). (2000). Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, [Film still].

The styling of Yu Jiaolong can be divided into many stages. These stages construct the context of the whole film. Yu Jiaolong in the palace is a lady from Xinjiang who has a good upbringing. She behaves solemnly and properly, and her clothes are elegant and gorgeous. Yu Jiaolong in men's clothing wears light men's clothing, which is noble and chic. The key is to create the fight in Juxing Tower. The thin fabric is easy to produce a fluttering beauty. In the end, Yu Jiaolong only borrowed a large underwear from Yu Xiulian and fought in a hurry. Later, she fled to the bamboo forest and chased Li Mubai on the bamboo shoots. In a large green bamboo sea, the bamboo leaves were swaying. The two people wore the same beige tone, which produced a light and ambiguous feeling. The wide clothes and highly concentrated colors produced a mysterious effect corresponding to each other. The most fascinating thing about oriental aesthetics is the

natural inaction and the aesthetics of life that conforms to nature. What matters is the dialogue between man and nature. That nature is extracted from the Chinese cultural heritage.



Figure 4.10 Ang Lee. (Director). (2000). Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, [Film still].

Most of the costumes in the movie are made of the most flowing fabrics, which enhances the sense of movement of the fabric, even when walking, to show the lightness of a person standing on the tip of a bamboo. If you only wear a long gown, the movement is not that great, and it seems nothing special. But after adding an outer robe, the fabric of this garment is the same as the long gown, which is very thin, and it looks like one piece from a distance. But the two sides are split very high, and when the actor stands on the tip of a bamboo, these pieces of the lapels will float up. This change can show the inner state of the character.

4.2.1.5 Acting

“In martial arts movies, directors give characters more imagination, use actions as rhetorical elements for characters, break the continuity of space, make actions independent from space, become the supporting elements of the spiritual freedom of martial arts movies, and make actions have unexpected tension effects. This is actually one of the reasons for the emergence of martial arts movies.”(Yang Mei, 2018). The lens's performance gives the action a rhetorical quality, imbuing it with a different meaning, namely, a sense of freehand style. Such performance liberates the movie from simple action narratives and simple action conflicts. It is neither bound by the plot of the story nor by the authenticity and power of the action itself.

Therefore, it gets rid of the characteristics of martial arts movies and action movies. It shows the freedom of the Chinese chivalrous spirit, the unrestrained, righteous and clear romantic feelings. There are many "wuwu" movements in the movie *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. "Wuwu" movements can be seen in the book "Classic of Mountains and Seas", which records the story of "Xingtian dancing with a halberd, his fierce will is always there" (Luo Mengshan, 2004), which means that the warrior (dancer) Xingtian was beheaded by the Emperor of Heaven, but he did not surrender, so he "used his nipples as eyes and his navel as a mouth, and danced with a halberd".

This shows that Chinese martial arts and Chinese dance have been integrated and reflected each other since ancient times. "Wuwu" is specifically manifested in movies. It is designed and arranged by martial arts action directors, and is mainly based on martial

arts fighting. Because this kind of martial arts fighting is a highly artistic and performative artistic action spectacle, it is called "wuwu" action on the screen. The martial arts dance movements in martial arts movies do not pursue simple fighting but integrate martial arts movements into the elements of Chinese folk dance to make it an artistic performance suitable for the plot and story. In early Chinese martial arts films, the documentary beauty of martial arts movements was emphasized, and the restoration of movements was pursued. However, martial arts films after the 20th century have shed the inherent patterns and routines of early martial arts films and have changed from a realistic style to a romantic style.

They use special effects and digital synthesis technology, slow-motion shooting, and dance elements to form new martial arts movements and new martial arts scenes. Flying over eaves and walls, walking on water, and wandering in bamboo forests are typical representatives. These martial arts movements are miniatures of dance. They show a kind of agile and elegant beauty. New martial arts films pay attention to the exquisiteness and charm of martial arts movements to comprehensively consider, pay attention to the combination of virtual and real movements, and pay attention to the connection between traditional culture and modern technology.

The bamboo forest chase in the martial arts film *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* is a very typical example. The fight between Li Mubai and Yu Jiaolong is presented in the bamboo forest. The two chivalrous men fly in the swaying bamboo forest and wander between the picturesque mountains and rivers. Sometimes they fly to the top of the

bamboo forest, sometimes they fall vertically, and the sword slides through the bamboo forest. Li Mubai shuttles through the bamboo forest to avoid the sword, and Yu Jiaolong dodges cleverly, showing poetry back and forth. The martial arts scenes here are not just the reproduction of martial arts movements, but a martial arts dance performance with martial arts movements as the main part and dance elements added. It is completely poetic and artistic. The reason why such an artistic effect can be presented is first of all due to the precise shooting of the movements and the accurate grasp of the rhythm characteristics of the movements.



Figure 4.11 Ang Lee. (Director). (2000). Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, [Film 01:36:42].

Secondly, it incorporates Chinese folk-dance elements. Thirdly, it uses digital technology appropriately to decompose and reorganize different action shots, so that it presents a dance-like action performance. There are few nations in the world and any

type of movies that can perfectly combine the dance-like martial arts movements in martial arts movies with their inner souls like the Chinese nation and present them on the screen. The "martial dance" movements here are the unique action charm of martial arts movies.

The plot of the movie *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* is very compact, and the description of the rivers and lakes is very detailed. The friendship, morality, and chivalrous spirit between the characters are displayed in detail. The actors perfectly demonstrated the relationship between people and the world and the souls of the children of the world who yearn for freedom. The actors portrayed the characters perfectly. Li Mubai's character image: Li Mubai is a very famous knight in the world, respected by everyone in the world. The Qingming Sword is the weapon he uses when walking in the world, and it is also his representative symbol. To a certain extent, the Qingming Sword also represents Li Mubai's morality based on the world and his unchanging beliefs. At the beginning of the movie *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"*, Li Mubai proposed to end the retreat and give the Qingming Sword to Lord Belle as a gift. Why would Li Mubai hand over the weapons he uses to travel around the world? The first is because Li Mubai and Yu Xiulian have always been taken care of by Lord Beile, who has given them a lot of help.



Figure 4.12 Ang Lee. (Director). (2000). *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, [Film 00:04:35].

The second is that he handed over the Green Underworld Sword to Lord Beile. With Lord Beile's noble identity and social status, he could stop other people in the world from coveting the Green Underworld Sword. Lord Baylor is the central figure connecting the world and the officialdom. He represents both power and morality. In the movie "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*", director Ang Lee used the differences in each character's appearance music to express each character's distinct personality traits, and at the same time, it also foreshadowed the character's final fate. The film begins with cello accompaniment and continues throughout Li Mubai's appearance, closely combining Li Mubai's character and the timbre of the cello. The cello has a rich and rich tone, which can show Li Mubai's deep and complex emotions. At the same time, it also shows that his character is both stable and elegant.

Yu Xiulian's character image: Yu Xiulian is Li Mubai's confidant. Li Mubai hopes that Yu Xiulian will hand over the Green Underworld Sword to Lord Beile, which shows Li

Mubai's trust in Yu Xiulian. For Yu Xiulian, the Green Underworld Sword is not only a weapon, but also a symbol of her lover Li Mubai. When Yu Jiaolong was full of curiosity about the Green Underworld Sword, Yu Xiulian told the story of the Green Underworld Sword. Her understanding of Qingming Sword also reflects her love for Li Mubai from the side. Yu Xiulian pursues Yu Jiaolong who stole the Qingming Sword. On the surface, she is chasing the Qingming Sword, but in fact it is a metaphor for Yu Xiulian's pursuit of Li Mubai. When Yu Jiaolong used the Green Underworld Sword as a weapon to duel with Yu Xiulian, Yu Jiaolong slashed Yu Xiulian's weapons many times. However, this did not make Yu Xiulian angry. What really made Yu Xiulian furious was when Yu Jiaolong touched the Green Underworld Sword.

It can be seen from this that at this time, for Yu Xiulian, the Qingming Sword is not only a weapon, but also a representative of Li Mubai - it can only be owned by her and cannot be touched or defiled by others. The cello is Li Mubai's representative, and Director Ang Lee used the erhu to portray Yu Xiulian's character. The erhu reflects Yu Xiulian's character. The erhu's soft and beautiful tone complements Yu Xiulian's virtuous character. Yu Xiulian has been by Li Mubai's side for many years and has never made any excessive demands on Li Mubai. But it is precisely because Yu Xiulian's character is too gentle that the emotional gap between her and Li Mubai has never been filled, and both parties are trapped in moral etiquette. It is precisely because of this that the relationship between Yu Xiulian and Li Mubai is destined to end in tragedy, and their relationship is full of tragedy.



Figure 4.13 Ang Lee. (Director). (2000). Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, [Film 00:08:41].

The character image of Yu Jiaolong: For Yu Jiaolong, the Qingming Sword symbolizes the world she yearns for, and is the best embodiment of her admiration and appreciation for Li Mubai. It is precisely because of this that Yu Jiaolong stole the Qingming Sword, hoping to take it with him to travel around the world. But when Yu Jiaolong was in the Jianghu, she realized that the real Jianghu was completely different from the Jianghu she longed for. Therefore, she resolutely chose to use the Qingming Sword to challenge the rules of the world that she did not agree with. Yu Jiaolong did not care about morality and etiquette. She spurned the hypocrisy in the world. She hoped to create the world she wanted in her heart. Because Yu Jiaolong has a rebellious and decisive character, she dared to steal the Qingming Sword boldly.

When Luo Xiaohu snatched her comb, she dared to chase him immediately and quickly fell in love with him. Yu Jiaolong and Yu Xiulian are both women, but their

personalities are completely different. Director Ang Lee chose to use the pipa to portray the character of Yu Jiaolong. The timbre of the pipa is crisp, translucent, highly penetrating, and has grainy characteristics. Yu Jiaolong is a bright and charming girl with a rebellious spirit. She yearns for freedom and dares to pursue it. After discovering that the real world was not what she imagined, she dared to challenge.



Figure 4.14 Ang Lee. (Director). (2000). Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, [Film 01:42:13].

4.2.1.6 Movie Soundtrack

Film music is an important part of the audio-visual language of movies. After more than half a century of development, Chinese film music has gone through ups and downs and hardships and has now entered a period of continuous development and rise. “The music of Chinese movies absorbs excellent nutrients from traditional Chinese culture, is influenced by the long history and culture of Chinese culture and the traditional aesthetic psychology of the nation, and is impacted by foreign music culture, showing a unique national characteristic.”(Yang Wen, 2022).The long-standing and profound

cultural heritage makes the music burst out with its powerful vitality. Therefore, using music to express movies will make the movie icing on the cake. "Different music participates in different types of film narratives and produces different effects, but music mainly participates in the narrative of the movie in the form of theme music, background music, scene music, and film songs" (Li Yuxuan, 2022).

The music of the movie "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" participates in the narrative, exaggerates the emotions of the film, expands the meaning of the film, and maximizes the film's extraordinary effects. At the same time, it has also become a model for other martial arts movies to follow. As a famous Chinese music composer, Tan Dun joined the creative camp of the film "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" to add color to the film. Tan Dun accurately grasped the romantic spirit and the artistic conception of the coexistence of reality and illusion in "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*".

After months of careful creation, he created a fascinating and confusing soundtrack. Master Tan Dun's music creation completed the reconstruction of the film, thus achieving the purpose of sublimating the theme. This well-created soundtrack consists of multiple movements, full of oriental ethereal artistic conception. The overall style characteristics are like the characteristics of the painting style. It sounds like a sudden drizzle in the silent sky, and a trace of emotion emerges. The movie screen is synchronized with the movie music, which increases the poetic characteristics of the film and makes people have endless aftertaste. The music of the movie "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" is composed of a theme song and thirteen soundtracks. The

beginning of the film is like the theme songs of most movies, and the cello is the main instrument for this theme song. The soundtrack "*Crossing the Bamboo Forest*" is mainly played by Xiao, the soundtrack "*Going South*" is mainly played by bamboo flute, and "*Confrontation*" is played by Pipa. Various Chinese folk instruments and Western instruments are integrated together, which not only shows the freshness and tranquility of folk instruments, but also perfectly presents the low and melodious melody characteristics of the cello.

A quiet, harmonious, mysterious, fresh, elegant and poetic music system has been formed. This kind of music method is integrated into the martial arts movie "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*", which itself has the characteristics of Chinese classical aesthetics, adding a poetic color to the film. This is also one of the reasons why the movie "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" can win awards and even become an excellent model of the times.

The theme music of the movie "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" is a three-part music structure, using cello and guitar from Western instruments to express the refreshing feeling of music. Music creator Tan Dun used beautiful melodies to build a beautiful life utopia that is isolated from the world, away from the grudges and fighting of the rivers and lakes, and full of natural scenery. The theme music played by the cello opened the prelude of the film, which was slow, low and full of sentimentality. First of all, it created a heavy atmosphere of sadness for the film. Secondly, the slightly trembling tone added to the music, combined with the unique water town in the south of

the Yangtze River, unveiled the mysterious veil of the film, just like a long scroll of ink painting was slowly opened in the course of history, and the picture was a quiet, beautiful, and harmonious water town in the south of the Yangtze River. The scenery is picturesque and poetic.

The second theme music in the movie *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* starts with the reason why Li Mubai wants to stay away from the rivers and lakes and asks Yu Xiulian to bring a Qingming sword to Beile Ye. The music began to become compact and anxious as Yu Xiulian entered the capital, and it was slow and tight, which laid the groundwork for the development of the story later. The third section of the theme music of the movie *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* is presented with a picture overlooking the whole view of Beijing, and the story of the whole movie begins to unfold.

The combination of fast and slow music, sparse and dense music, and tension and relaxation better express the plot and theme of the movie. It renders a poetic atmosphere for the display of the theme of the movie. The theme music is used in martial arts movies to achieve a kind of tranquility and harmony. At the same time, it cooperates with the narrative of the movie to create a visual and auditory picture with aesthetic emotions, highlighting the high skills and rich soul of a generation of knights. The background music of the movie *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* mainly revolves around the intricate love story of the four protagonists of the movie, Li Mubai, Yu Xiulian, Luo Xiaohu, and Yu Jiaolong. The background music of the movie is mainly

played with erhu, the tone is sad and beautiful, and then it is matched with other string and wind instruments. The middle part of the background music adds a erhu glissando, which has a sense of ups and downs. The drums and hammers run through the beginning and end of the film. For example, at the end of the film, Luo Xiaohu and Yu Jiaolong finally get together after overcoming many obstacles. At this time, the background music remembers the sad and gentle bamboo flute sound. Finally, they can be together. It should be a joyful mood, but at this time, the gentle and sad bamboo flute sound is used instead, aiming to create a sad atmosphere, add a sense of sadness, and pave the way for the ending of the film.

Among them, the performance of the erhu shows the protagonist's sad, soft and vivid love, showing the sad beauty of the protagonist's love. Most of the scene music in the movie *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* is relatively simple and clear. Whether it is the harmony performance part or the instrument performance part, it is simple and elegant without losing its freshness. In this film, the scene music is mainly composed of tunes around the fighting scenes. The poetic beauty of the picture is expressed. The two fighting scenes of the city wall chase and the bamboo forest battle are perfectly matched with the scene music, and the picture and poetic sense of the movie reach the extreme.

In the chase scene on the city wall, Yu Jiaolong stole the Qingming Sword, and Yu Xiulian chased after her. During this time, the two flew over the eaves and walls, each showing their magical powers. Tan Dun added the traditional Chinese musical instruments drums and hammers here and used drums and hammers to set the tone for

the chase between the two sides. Because the drums and hammers have a thick, tragic and imposing tone.

Therefore, using such scene music seems to cheer for the chase and fight between the two sides, presenting an audio-visual feast in the fighting scene. Such scene music, combined with the city walls, rooftop chases and fights in the dark night, presents a tragic and vast poetic feeling. For example, in the bamboo forest scene of "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*", first, Tan Dun introduced the traditional Chinese musical instrument Xiao, which is one of the commonly used instruments in Chinese martial arts movies, symbolizing the spirit of chivalrous knights. The sound of the Xiao is combined with the sound of fighting between swords, alternating.

This can undoubtedly better express the poetic beauty of the spirit of chivalrous knights; secondly, the timbre of the instrument Xiao is vast and bleak, and the sound of the Xiao can better render the helplessness and desolation of the grievances in the rivers and lakes. Li Mubai stood on the top of the bamboo forest, dancing elegantly with the Qingming Sword like a knight who had seen through the world and was extraordinary. Yu Jiaolong was light and swift, and attacked from both sides. The combination of movement and stillness, accompanied by music, made their fight take on a poetic and fresh beauty.

4.3 Introduction To "Let the Bullets Fly"

"*Let the Bullets Fly*" is a 2010 Chinese mainland drama film directed by Jiang Wen and the first of Jiang Wen's Beiyang Trilogy. The film has two main versions, Mandarin and Sichuan dialect, starring Jiang Wen, Chow Yun-fat, Ge You, Carina Lau and Chen Kun. The film grossed RMB 659 million in China, year 2011. The film is based on the third chapter of the novel "*Ten Tales of Night*" by Sichuan writer Ma Shi Tu, "*The Story of Stealing Officials*". The film is about 2 hours and 12 minutes long. The film is set in the early Beiyang era after the Xinhai Revolution and uses the Hongmen Banquet and Xiao Fengxian as the themes of the play. The story revolves around the struggle between Ma Bangde (played by Ge You) and Zhang Muzhi (played by Jiang Wen).

Ma Bangde is a county magistrate who buys official positions and tries to make money through illegal means. When he goes to Echeng to take up his post, he is attacked by the bandit leader Zhang Muzhi. Zhang Muzhi pretends to be Ma Bangde and enters Goose City, only to find that it has been controlled by the bully Huang Silang (played by Chow Yun-fat). Zhang Muzhi decides to use Ma Bangde's identity to unite the people of Goose City to fight against Huang Silang's tyranny. The film reveals the good and evil, justice and corruption in human nature through a series of thrilling action scenes and hilarious humorous plots.

"*Let the Bullets Fly*" shows the social reality of that turbulent era and explores the themes of power, justice, and revenge through vivid character portrayals and compact plots.

In this chapter, the author will analyze the film techniques of "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" from the following aspects: Set design, Lighting, Composition, Costume, Acting, Movie Soundtrack. Through these analyses, the author will explore the similarities and differences between "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" and "*Let the Bullets Fly*" in film techniques, the influence of these cinematic techniques on Chinese modern cinema.

4.3.1 Analysis of Cinematic Techniques In "Let the Bullets Fly"

In analyzing the film "*Let the Bullets Fly*", this section will focus on six key cinematic techniques: set design, lighting, composition, costume, acting, and soundtrack. These techniques are not only fundamental components of the film's visual and auditory narrative but also play a critical role in intensifying narrative tension, shaping character identities, and evoking the film's historical atmosphere. Set design and costume choices meticulously recreate the film's historical setting and regional characteristics, providing a spatial and temporal reference. Lighting and composition, through their use of color and shadow, heighten the film's emotional intensity and add visual depth, contributing to its distinctive cinematic style. Additionally, the actors' performances convey nuanced character traits, enriching the narrative depth and psychological complexity of the film. The soundtrack, as an auditory element, both enhances the emotional direction of the visual narrative and offers deeper emotional resonance for viewers in key scenes. These six aspects are selected for analysis because they interweave within the film's themes, stylistic construction, and emotional expression, forming an artistic whole. Through an in-depth analysis of these techniques, this study aims to uncover the unique applications

of cinematic language in *"Let the Bullets Fly"*, thus providing theoretical insight into its narrative intentions and artistic style.

4.3.1.1 Set design



Figure 4.15 Jiang Wen. (Director). (2010). Let the Bullets Fly, [Film 02:33].

The former Soviet film master Eisenstein once said: "The parallelism of two montage shots is not the sum of two numbers, but more like the product of two numbers." (Yong Youqing, 2011) The success of *"Let the Bullets Fly"* interprets the profound connotation of this famous saying. Director Jiang Wen uses the parallelism of two montage shots to create a movie scene that integrates humor, tension, excitement, suspense, action, violence, and other elements, concentrating the climax of the movie in a small space, delivering a great visual impact. Coupled with the exaggerated and rough plot setting, the plot pulls attention like a train from beginning to end, tying emotions and desires firmly to the movie.

After watching this movie, almost everyone will have a feeling that their heart seems to be broken, which is integrated into a broken, romantic, humorous and violent beauty. "The success of the movie *"Let the Bullets Fly"* has proved that the main job of a film director is to express a well-chosen movie event as strongly as possible through the color, lines and lighting effects of the picture; in terms of hearing, through sound, motion effects, music and other spatial modeling elements, through effective and advanced recording methods to design and record." (Song Chao, 2011) This also fully demonstrates how excellent the set design of the movie *Let the Bullets Fly* is.

At the beginning of the movie, the melodious and slow song of the popular "Farewell" sounded, "Outside the long pavilion, beside the ancient road, the grass is green: the evening wind blows the willows and the sound of the flute is faint, the sunset is beyond the mountains; at the end of the sky, the corner of the earth, half of the friends are gone, a pot of muddy wine is enough to make the remaining joy, and I will not dream of the cold tonight." Ma Bangde and his wife eat hot pot and drink fine wine. The sad melody is matched with the cheerful scene, which is completely opposite to the content to be shown next. The horses are galloping, the trains are speeding, and the world in the distance is observed from the gun scope, observing everything that is about to happen in a calm way, while the gunman will press the trigger at any time, and the danger is lurking everywhere. In the stillness and movement, a strong contrast is formed, which makes people feel the absurdity and humor from the beginning. As the horses galloped and the train started, there were several consecutive gunshots. Zhang Mazi said leisurely: "*Let the bullets fly* for a while!" Accompanied by Joe Hisaishi's "*The Sun Also Rises*",

Zhang Mazi led his men to gallop on horseback, giving people enough time and space to fantasize.

From the background setting of *"Let the Bullets Fly"*, it should be during the Ming Dynasty, when most of China's trains were powered by steam engines. The film also presents this situation. As the train whistles, the white smoke from the steam engine is seen, the 'boom, boom' sound from the train is heard, and the shock of the train's speed is felt. But what follows is a picture that is extremely asymmetrical with the expected thinking.

More than a dozen white horses come into view with a neigh, and after a closer look, they pull a train behind them. This scenario raises a big question mark. Can horses pull a train? And can they also move forward at a high speed? There is a huge contrast between the expected thinking and the content of the film. After breaking through this expectation, the heart is completely attracted by the content of the film.

Most of the tense atmosphere in the movie is driven by the tense plot. The same is true in *"Let the Bullets Fly"*. The death of the county magistrate's son Xiao Liuzi can be said to have intensified the conflict between the county magistrate and Huang Silang. The conflict that could have been reconciled has become an irreconcilable enemy, and the whole plot has a thrilling and exciting climax. Unlike other commercial blockbusters that pursue overwhelming beauty in the climax, *"Let the Bullets Fly"* takes place in a small space, speeding up the plot to create an atmosphere of murderous intent. Here,

wisdom, suspense, gunfights, and martial arts are everywhere, which together promote the rapid development of the plot. The small space makes the plot more compact.



Figure 4.16 Jiang Wen. (Director). (2010). Let the Bullets Fly, [Film 49:36].

The narrow space highlights the conflict between the county magistrate and Huang Silang. In the second half of the film, the director chose two places for the scene design, namely the street and the square. The street looks very long, but in fact its space is also limited. In addition, the background time is set to night, which creates the impression that the space is even smaller. After the failure of the county magistrate's "Hongmen Banquet", the county magistrate turned his attention to the people who had been oppressed by Huang Silang for a long time and wanted to gain the trust of the people by giving money. Unfortunately, Huang Silang thought of this, so he asked his men to pretend to be bandits and rob money after the county magistrate and his men had distributed money to disrupt the county magistrate's plan. Around "distributing money" and "robbing money", real and fake bandits jumped up and down and ran on the narrow streets.

The conflict between the county magistrate and Huang Silang changed from indirect confrontation to direct confrontation with real swords and guns. The "distribution" and "robbery" were direct confrontations between the two sides of the conflict. When Huang Silang's plan failed, Huang's housekeeper Hu Wan and five other servants were killed, and the first round of the conflict ended. In the final stage of the film, the county magistrate and Huang Silang changed the distribution of money into the distribution of money and guns and the robbery of money and guns. The conflict became more intense. In the narrow space of the square, the two sides fought back and forth, and the camera used montage techniques to quickly switch between the two sides, coupled with deafening drums, to construct a tense and exciting movie scene, directly showing the crazy actions of the conflicting parties to win the confrontation, and constructing a thrilling and fierce conflict scene. In short, "the vitality of the movie comes from life, but it must be higher than life and break through the limitations of life's thinking, that is, to boldly innovate in pictures, scenes, etc., and get out of the original thinking circle, in order to achieve success in the expression of the movie." (Yong Youqing, 2011) This is concentrated in the design of the movie scene, *"Let the Bullets Fly"* is just like this.



Figure 4.17 Jiang Wen. (Director). (2010). Let the Bullets Fly, [Film 08:58].

4.3.1.2 Lighting

“Since the camera that shoots movies uses the principle of light and shadow to create images, both videography and photography are the art of light and shadow. The reasonable use of light and shadow can greatly add points to the movie. Generally, light is divided into artificial light and natural light. Almost all directors and photographers will consider the use of light when shooting pictures, because the reasonable use of light can accurately express meaning.” (Yang Yuzhu, 2021) By changing the angle and brightness of the light, the creator can draw the viewer's attention to where he or she wants them to pay attention and capture their attention. In people's cognition, there is a clear understanding of light and darkness. Brightness has a bright meaning, which makes people feel comfortable and gives people a sense of security. It is a good psychology. Therefore, it has been extended to most good things and moral qualities. Darkness has an evil connotation. It gives people a feeling of depression, uneasiness and conspiracy. It is a bad feeling. People classify all bad and evil things and qualities as darkness.



Figure 4.18 Jiang Wen. (Director). (2010). Let the Bullets Fly, [Film 01:49:28].

The use of lighting is inseparable from the style and theme of the film. For example, light and cheerful films such as comedies and musicals often use brighter lights to make the picture more transparent and give people a relaxed and comfortable feeling: The lighting style of horror films, thrillers and suspense films tends to be dark, and the overall picture is relatively depressing, making people feel full of crisis and conspiracy. Of course, there are also lighting styles in between, that is, the bright areas are particularly bright, and the dark areas are extremely dark, thus forming a sharp contrast and a high degree of contrast, which are generally used more in tragedy movies. The movie "*Let the Bullets Fly*" Pay more attention to creating an atmosphere, using brighter lights and lighting contrast to create a tense atmosphere. For example, bright lights and high-contrast light and shadow are used many times in the film during gun battles at night, when both sides are fighting fiercely in the dark.



Figure 4.19 Jiang Wen. (Director). (2010). Let the Bullets Fly, [Film 01:15:46].

4.3.1.3 Composition

In the film composition, we can see the originality of director Jiang Wen, which is full of exaggeration, surprise and jokes. The white horse pulling the train, the oversized hot pot, the mahjong mask, the woman beating the drum at the beginning, etc., these props make people want to laugh when they appear in the film. The train can drive by itself, but it is pulled by a white horse, which is obviously superfluous; and the hot pot as big as a table, one might exclaim where there is such a big hot pot. The common bandits in the movie are covered with black scarves, but the bandits in 'Let the Bullets Fly' cover their faces with white scarves featuring mahjong patterns, which is different; when County Magistrate Ma arrives in Goose City to take office, he is welcomed by the Northwest drum, and the drummer changes from a Northwest man to a sturdy woman. This series of exaggerated film compositions deeply stimulates the senses and induces laughter, as these elements present visual details not commonly seen in other movies, making everything appear fresh and novel.



Figure 4.20 Jiang Wen. (Director). (2010). *Let the Bullets Fly*, [Film 00:04:25].

4.3.1.4 Costumes

The costume design of "*Let the Bullets Fly*" was done by the master William Chang. William Chang is a legendary art director in the Hong Kong film industry, and he has been the art director for all the films of Hong Kong director Wong Kar-wai. William Chang conducted serious research before designing the costumes for this film. The story is set in the Republic of China era, when the "World Fashion Fair" was held. The collision of Western civilization and traditional Chinese culture made Western-style clothes popular, and many people also wore old-style clothes.

William Chang said that Carina Lau's character in the film is "relatively open, and she can wear transparent clothes. And stockings were very popular in that era." He said that Jiang Wen's sunglasses in the film "are not creation, but restoration of the feeling of that era." For example, Shao Bing's one-eyed look and Zhang Mo's earrings are innovative and in line with the customs of the time. (William Cheung, 2010) said that although

Zhang Mo's messy hair and earrings look very fashionable, in the South during the Republic of China era, "it was believed that giving boys earrings would help them grow up more smoothly."

As the most important character in the film, Zhang Mazi's styling can be called changeable, but if you carefully appreciate each set of styling, you will find that the essential personality characteristics of the character are not lost. According to the description in the play, Zhang Mazi is a sharpshooter who has fought in wars and served as a captain. Therefore, he is very familiar with the state of wearing military uniforms, and he is full of toughness and momentum. This should be the most authentic character of the character Zhang Mazi and the actor Jiang Wen.



Figure 4.21 Jiang Wen. (Director). (2010). Let the Bullets Fly, [Film 08:17].

The multiple personalities of Zhang Mazi's multiple roles in the film make the mix and match of military uniforms and Chinese clothes very perfect, and the combination with

the character's personality characteristics is very natural, combining rigidity and softness, combining Chinese and Western styles, and being chic and suave, full of flavor. Whether it is the bandit leader who robbed the train at the beginning of the movie, to the elegant image of the county magistrate when he entered Goose City, to the hero full of justice when he wiped out Huang Silang, all of this is reflected. As a domineering character, the fierce and decisive bandit costume, the elegant gentleman in the county magistrate costume, and the mighty justice of the military uniform are fully reflected in him.

Take the plot in the film as an example. When Zhang Mazi entered Goose City, he wore a white hat, white suit, white shirt, and white tie. This white outfit showed his elegance and gentlemanly demeanor. Jiang Wen's own handsome temperament was integrated with the perfect white suit, showing his chic charm. When he announced the suppression of bandits with Huang Silang and Master Tang, he wore a hat and black round-frame sunglasses and wore a Western-style military uniform. When he promoted the attitude of suppressing bandits, he was majestic.

When Zhang Mazi called on the people to overthrow Huang Silang, he opened his shirt, breeches and long boots, and fired at the sky, which was extraordinary. Considering that the era in which the story took place was very special, in addition to Western-style suits and military uniforms, Zhang Mazi also had many Chinese-style looks in this film. He wore five or six sets of such Chinese-style clothes, including dark green, black, ochre, gray, cream yellow, cold gray, etc., which fully demonstrated the characteristics of the

character's majestic and strong character. As the most important character in the film, Zhang Mazi possesses nobleness, generosity, banditry and oiliness. His image is very rich, and his appearance highlights it to the fullest.



Figure 4.22 Jiang Wen. (Director). (2010). Let the Bullets Fly, [Film still].

Although Huang Silang's clothes are not too much, he is a squire in the county at that time, and his clothes are mostly western suits. He is well-dressed and pays attention to details everywhere. He always appears in orthodox suits, which are dignified and majestic. The three-piece suit is his daily dress. Suits, trousers, vests, the same style, the color of the clothes has undergone subtle changes. In addition to the orthodox black, there is also elegant ivory white. In the details of the clothes, it also shows the squire's generosity and westernization. The top hat, gun lapel, cufflinks, rings, collar pins, pocket watch straps, these are absolutely westernized details. At the same time, Zhang Shuping used exquisite tailoring in the design, so it gives people the image of an

absolute gentleman. And after being hyped by Zhang Mazi, the messy hairstyle and dark red Chinese robes look decadent. The styling in the play is mainly based on Western clothing culture, which also reflects the pursuit of quality of life as a squire at that time, and the cunning heart hidden under the elegant styling is also expressed through Zhou Runfa's acting skills.



Figure 4.23 Jiang Wen. (Director). (2010). Let the Bullets Fly, [Film still].

In the film, Ge You (Ma Bangde) always appears in a long gown and a mandarin jacket. Long gowns and mandarin jackets are the most orthodox dresses for Chinese officials and gentry after the Qing Dynasty and have been used until modern times. The workmanship is exquisite and sophisticated, and the fabrics are of various colors. The long gown can visually stretch a person's height, and the mandarin jacket can set off a man's stature in terms of volume. The long gown and mandarin jacket can fully show the elegance of Chinese men and are clothes with extremely Chinese aesthetic tastes. In the play, the changes in fabrics are the most common, and Ge You with a top hat is even more absurd.



Figure 4.24 Jiang Wen. (Director). (2010). Let the Bullets Fly, [Film still].

Ge You has long hair, a top hat, a black gown and a white shirt, and his image is not changeable. Under such an orthodox image, Ma Bangde is more like a conservative and introverted character, but Ge You captivates with his personal charm and full acting skills. In the play, he is sometimes confused and sometimes cunning in his conversations, which also reflects the black humor and absurdity in the film.

In addition to providing visual stimulation, the costumes also enhance the plot as the story progresses. Each story node is closely linked, and in addition to the steady advancement of the story, the costumes not only complement the visuals but also support the plot, making the characters and the story complement each other and jointly promote the development of the movie.

4.3.1.5 Acting

In the movie *"Let the Bullets Fly"*, each character has a very distinct and independent personality, and the actors are very professional in interpreting their roles. Ma Bangde is a liar who is greedy for money, lustful and greedy for life, Zhang Mazi is a domineering and resourceful bandit, and Huang Silang is a ruthless, cunning and cunning bully. Their character traits are brought to life by three top Chinese actors.

“He can gallop on a horse in the mountains and jungles, with passionate passion, and a pistol, and he can move forward with a hundred steps; he is not greedy for money, he is heroic and courageous, and lives a free and open life in the world. He is Zhang Mazi in Jiang Wen's movie *"Let the Bullets Fly"*. A hero who seems incomparable but lonely inside.” (Tang Hai, 2014).

He is a hero, an upright man. In the film, most of the shots showing Zhang Mazi place him in the center of the screen, with his legs spread apart and his hands on his waist, standing resolutely, full of a kingly demeanor, and when Zhang Mazi appears, , mostly fast-paced and exciting music, which further enriches the heroic image of the entire character and gives people a strong shock. Although Zhang Mazi's performance techniques in the film are extremely shocking, in fact the theme that the director wants to express is not here, but his inner world under the aura of a hero. In the film, a conversation between Zhang Mazi and Xiaoliu is the first large-scale introduction to Zhang Mazi's inner life. Here, Zhang Mazi changed his rough and bold tone for the first time, and began to become gentle and gentle, like a loving father. In this paragraph,

Zhang Mazi carefully introduced the CD played by the gramophone to Xiao Liu, introduced Mozart, and a very important sentence was, Zhang Mazi said that after finishing this matter, he would send Xiao Liu to study abroad. This not only showed his love for a "son" who was not related to him by blood, but also a transfer of his own ideals. Later in the film, in the conversation between Zhang Mazi and Master Tang, Zhang Mazi once mentioned what happened when he was young.



Figure 4.25 Jiang Wen. (Director). (2010). Let the Bullets Fly, [Film 00:20:22].

He was successful as a young man, but due to the melee between warlords, he fell into trouble and became a bandit. So he placed his hope in Xiao Liu, hoping that he could do something good and no longer be a bandit like him. From another perspective, he saw that he did not like the life of fighting and killing. So he wants Xiao Liu to leave this life. Another episode that clearly shows Zhang Mazi's inner feelings is the death of Master Tang. This can also be said to be a small climax that shows Zhang Mazi's inner feelings. Zhang Mazi knelt next to Master Tang, with his head lowered. The camera

looked up at his face with a sad expression. Gradually, the music started playing and the sound was sad. The camera changed to an overhead shot, and the camera position became higher and higher. The figure of Zhang Mazi kneeling on the ground becomes smaller and smaller, and then accompanied by his inner monologue, the effect of the entire picture is integrated to the best. Here, not only does Zhang Mazi become smaller in the picture, but it is also a reflection of the character's heart. He is a hero, but he is not everything. He cannot prevent death and cannot change reality. On a deeper level, it expresses the insignificance of human society and the overall environment. At the same time, this is also the place where Zhang Mazi showed the weakness deep in his heart for the first time. Before this, his attitude towards Master Tang was a kind of teasing and teasing. But at this time, facing Master Tang's death, He acted more like he was saying goodbye to an old friend and it sparked his thoughts about the whole incident.



Figure 4.26 Jiang Wen. (Director). (2010). Let the Bullets Fly, [Film 02:00:57].

Ma Bangde is a very funny character in this film. He is not as domineering and overt as Zhang Muzhi, nor is he as cruel and cunning as Huang Silang. He is more like an

ordinary person, an ordinary person who is half despicable and half lovely. There is a saying: Those who know the current affairs are heroes. Although the word "hero" is a bit used to describe Ma Bangde, the general meaning is still there. At the beginning of the movie, when he was still the county magistrate, he could arrogantly point out the situation to Master Tang: "Liu Bang is a villain." When pretending to be a master, he could humbly call a bandit a "benefactor." When Huang Silang got his letter of appointment and exposed Zhang Muzhi's identity, he jumped back to his identity as county magistrate and dealt with Huang Silang. "Mr. Huang, you don't mean what you say! You said it well at the Hongmen Banquet... balabala" If he only knows how to assess the situation, then Ma Bangde cannot be said to be a smart person. His real wisdom is to pretend to be stupid, or to show weakness.



Figure 4.27 Jiang Wen. (Director). (2010). Let the Bullets Fly, [Film 01:39:55].

Showing weakness is disguise, and disguise, as an art of deception, requires not only the right language, but also the tone, expression, posture and other details to be perfect, so that no flaws will be exposed. As a capable actor, Ge You really brought Ma Bangde to

life. You can observe Ge You's posture in the film. Basically he lowers his head and holds his chest; and his expression, Basically, his mouth is half open and his face is blank, which outlines the image of a somewhat wretched and timid man. But in fact, the calculation in his mind was clicking loudly.



Figure 4.28 Jiang Wen. (Director). (2010). Let the Bullets Fly, [Film 01:19:54].

Compared with Zhang Muzhi and Ma Bangde, Huang Silang's background is relatively clear and simple "This is Huang Silang, a tyrant in the southern country. He is engaged in the big business of human trafficking and reselling cigarettes." "Who in the entire southern country doesn't know that in Goose City, you, Huang Silang, are the boss. "I don't know about the northern country. In my southern country, there are only two such collector's edition mines. As a big landowner in Sichuan for five generations and the local emperor of Echeng.



Figure 4.29 Jiang Wen. (Director). (2010). Let the Bullets Fly, [Film still].

Huang Silang can be seen from the way he rules Echeng that he is not a faint king or a mediocre king, but a tyrant. The martial arts men under him can beat the jelly vendor according to their own likes and dislikes, and the vendor neither dares to get angry nor speak out, which shows the extent of his cruelty. Of course, tyranny has never been associated with incompetence. Just from the excitement of the battle between Huang Silang and Zhang Muzhi throughout the film, we can see that Huang Silang is also a hero with great abilities.



Figure 4.30 Jiang Wen. (Director). (2010). Let the Bullets Fly, [Film 01:57:30].

4.3.1.6 Movie Soundtrack

“The music in the movie is natural, plain and simple. Real and natural music is closer to people's lives and emotions and can often deeply touch people's hearts and resonate with them” (Zhou Jun, 2012). The theme song of the movie *"Let the Bullets Fly"*, *"The Sun Also Rises"*, is very plain and simple, and is an expression of real emotions. The theme song of *"Let the Bullets Fly"*, *"The Sun Also Rises"*, is the work of the famous Japanese composer Joe Hisaishi. Joe Hisaishi has been working with Hayao Miyazaki for many years and is an indispensable music master in Hayao Miyazaki's animated films.

He has created popular world-famous songs such as *"Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind"* and *"My Neighbor Totoro"*. Joe Hisaishi's works can touch people's emotions and shock people's hearts, because the music reveals natural and simple emotions, which are very real. Joe Hisaishi's previous works are very gentle, making people feel like they are bathed in spring breeze, and there are no complicated showmanship, so people will not know where to appreciate them, and they will not cause the phenomenon of not understanding them. His works are the most simple and approachable, and they are a kind of quiet and comfortable music that can calm the listeners. Hisaishi is like a psychologist. He can grasp the purest and simple emotions in people's hearts and enter people's inner world. The style of *"The Sun Also Rises"* is different from Hisaishi's previous gentle works. This song sounds more majestic. The trumpet at the beginning seems to describe a heroic and high-spirited man who is going to the battlefield.

The cello music below is sad and low, as if describing a faintly sad, bright and moving woman, just like a person has a soft and vulnerable heart under a strong appearance. The appearance is strong, but there is always a faint sadness. This is the true emotion and feeling of most people. Living in a cruel competitive environment, people have to wear a strong disguise mask to protect themselves. When they are alone, they feel particularly fragile and helpless, hoping that someone will comfort themselves. This faint pain will be deeply felt by everyone. Hisaishi has grasped this psychology of people and used his works to directly hit the softest place in people's hearts, making people cry after listening. At the end of the song,

Joe Hisaishi broke the pessimistic and passive tone and changed to another positive and optimistic style of life. The re-invigorated music gave people a hope of rebirth from the ashes, making everything beautiful. Simple yet concise, the simple music also implies the ups and downs of the story. The greatest charm of music is that it can express the emotions deep in people's hearts that cannot be expressed by words and body movements and bring people into the depths of the soul to travel the world. "*The song 'The Sun Also Rises'*" firmly grasps people's inner world and makes people have the same emotional resonance. When people appreciate the plot of the movie, this song can quickly bring people into the movie." (Zhou Jun, 2012) The music in the movie is perfectly combined with the plot of the movie. The music in the movie can often cooperate well with the narrative of the movie and can modify the plot of the movie. It can change with the changes in the plot of the movie. At the same time, the changes in

music can also be used to control the rhythm of the movie, complete the communication of the meaning of the movie, and bring people a great aesthetic enjoyment.

Therefore, movies and music cannot be separated. Music is a very important part of the movie. There are many interludes in *"Let the Bullets Fly"* that are very cleverly used and fit the theme of the movie very well. When the song *"The Sun Also Rises"* by Joe Hisaishi first appeared in the movie, Zhang Mazi's masculine and bravery immediately stood out, which was an effect that could not be expressed by lines and personal performances alone. Then the trumpet was blown, and the scene of Zhang Mazi leading his brothers to charge into battle was presented in front of people's eyes.

The passionate music made everything in front of people seem full of the taste of victory, and also foreshadowed that a fierce battle was waiting for them. After Zhang Mazi entered Echeng, his sixth brother was killed by Huang Silang's design. Zhang Mazi and his sixth brother were like father and son. Zhang Mazi was heartbroken. At this time, the music was low and sad, showing the tender side of the men without reservation. The chivalrous and tender side of Zhang Mazi was fully expressed through music, and the character image was more vivid and three-dimensional. Next, Zhang Mazi decided to avenge his sixth brother, and generously distributed the ransom to the villagers. At this time, the background music was melodious and cheerful, showing a very gratifying emotion. Then the music gradually became stronger from weak, slowly pushing the story to the climax. Zhang Mazi went out of the city to suppress the bandits

and was ambushed by Huang Silang. Master Tang was ambushed by Huang Silang and killed by thunder.

Zhang Mazi returned to Echeng to fight Huang Silang. The changes in the pictures and the strengthening of the music pushed the plot of the whole film to a climax. The music at this time also reached its peak. The music at this time was shocking and penetrating. Until the end, when the villagers attacked Huang Silang's house together, the music was constantly strengthened, constantly changing and upgrading, until the end, the appeal was very strong. Movies are different from other arts. They can mobilize all people's senses and give people an unprecedented audio-visual feast. Movies are an art that integrates multiple elements. Movies cannot be separated from music. Music can not only set off the theme of the movie, but also promote the development of the plot.

“Film art is inseparable from music. Music can create a specific atmosphere and tone for the film, either locally or as a whole, and meticulously create a background atmosphere for the film, deepen the visual effects of the film, and enhance the appeal of the film” (Luo Aochen, 2015). The interludes used in the movie *"Let the Bullets Fly"* have been processed very carefully, have their own personality, and are very sophisticated. The weight of the music used is just right, which greatly enhances the artistic appeal of the film. The whole atmosphere of the movie *"Let the Bullets Fly"* is tragic. Under the strong and majestic appearance, there is a hint of sadness, giving people a desolate feeling. This is related to the character setting and the background of

the times in the play. The story takes place in the Republic of China, when warlords fought each other, the officialdom was dark, and the people were miserable.

Zhang Mazi was a "bandit" who wanted to save the world. Such a background of the times seemed to have doomed the story to a tragic ending, making people sad for the society at that time and sad for the heroes at that time. Therefore, the selection of the interlude in the movie is also based on the keynote of sadness. The interlude "Farewell" is used at the beginning and end of the movie *"Let the Bullets Fly"*. "Farewell" is a song widely sung by Chinese people to say goodbye and express their sorrow. This song was created during the Republic of China period by the painter Li Shutong.

The song has a beautiful and distant artistic conception, creating a desolate atmosphere for the beginning of the movie. In the empty mountains and the desolate suburbs, people are looking forward to a tragic hero to come on stage, which fits the tragic theme of the movie. The melodious and ethereal voice expresses the emotions and attitude towards life of the impermanence of life and the smile on the clouds.

Everything is empty, and I don't know when I will return. "Farewell" is used as a sustenance for the future and cheers for the hero. After the overall atmosphere is established, the local atmosphere is adjusted. For example, the language dubbing of the characters in the movie is mainly in Sichuan dialect, and the scenery and environment in the movie are also mainly based on the local customs of Sichuan. There is a song *"Suanqiu"* composed by composer Shu Nan in the movie. *"Suanqiu"* means "forget it"

in Sichuan dialect, which renders a strong local color. At the same time, the protagonist of the movie, Zhang Mazi, is also a "bandit". The conflict and meeting between the bandit and the bully are in a tense and exciting atmosphere, but the frivolous and humorous interlude "*Suanqiu*" is used. This interlude gives people a feeling of cynicism, carelessness and playfulness, which is in line with the character characteristics of the characters in the play and the "bandit-like" character image set. At the same time, it also covers this part of the plot with a veil of black humor, which is full of sarcasm.

In the whole film, the interlude "*Suanqiu*" is unique, completely different from the rough and hard style, adding a touch of color to the film. Of course, the main theme of this movie is still passionate. The movie uses the interlude "*Colonel Bokey's March*". This song was composed by the British composer Alford. The rhythm of this song is very strong. It was used in the movie to warn the public. This song created a jubilant, warm, ritual and mission atmosphere for this plot, which set off the funny and weird scene. The theme song of the movie is "*Let the Bullets Fly*". The beginning of the song is the sound of bullets loading, which seems to indicate that a good show is about to be staged. In the middle of the song, there are also the sounds of bullets loading and shooting, which gives people a very novel feeling. At the end of the song, there is a sound of a shell falling to the ground, which is neat and tidy, and creates a heroic image of a valiant and heroic in people's minds. The lyrics are also written very generously and passionately, showing a tragic scene of a hero bathing in blood on the battlefield. The interlude used in the movie "*Let the Bullets Fly*" strongly renders the era

background, local characteristics and psychology of the characters of the movie, adding a lot of luster to the movie.

In short, in addition to having a good plot and acting skills, a good movie also needs a complementary soundtrack. “Movies are a comprehensive art form that presents people with an audio-visual feast, allowing people's eyes and ears to enjoy the charm of movies, and using movies to thoroughly capture all people's sensory feelings. This is also the reason why movies have changed from silent to sound, adapting to people's sensory needs” (Zhu Hui, 2019). After the release of the movie *"Let the Bullets Fly"*, it has achieved great success and has attracted widespread comments. A large part of the reason for the success of this movie is the use of perfect soundtracks in the movie. The music in the movie perfectly matches the development of the plot, and also renders the tragic color to the fullest, satirizing the dark warlord society. The movie 'Let the Bullets Fly' uses music to capture attention, creating emotional resonance and pushing the artistic conception in the movie to the extreme, presenting an unprecedented audio-visual feast.

4.4 The Similarities and Differences In The "Cinematic Techniques Of "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" And "Let The Bullets Fly"

4.4.1 Introduction

Section 4.4 examines the similarities and differences in the cinematic techniques of *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* and *"Let the Bullets Fly"*, focusing on how each film employs set design, lighting, composition, costume, acting, and soundtrack to

achieve distinct narrative and aesthetic effects. Despite their varied genres and tones, both films utilize these techniques to shape visual storytelling, evoke cultural themes, and engage on multiple sensory levels. Through a comparative analysis of these six elements, this section aims to reveal how each film's unique approach to cinematic language reflects its artistic vision and cultural context, highlighting the interplay of tradition, modernity, and directorial style in defining their cinematic identities.

4.4.2 Set design

The set designs of "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" and "*Let the Bullets Fly*" offer distinct yet intriguing contrasts and similarities that highlight their unique approaches to visual storytelling. Both films utilize their environments to enhance the narrative, evoke emotions, and build a deeper connection. However, they achieve these goals through different methods and styles, reflecting their respective genres and directorial visions.

Similarities: Symbolic Use of Objects:

Both films use objects in their scenes to symbolize deeper meanings. In "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*," the Qingming Sword represents identity, grievances, and a spiritual realm. Similarly, "*Let the Bullets Fly*" uses objects like the train and the horses pulling it to symbolize the absurdity and irony of the narrative.

Integration of Cultural Elements:

Both movies deeply integrate elements of Chinese culture into their set designs.

"*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" uses traditional architecture, bamboo forests, and

the aesthetics of Chinese ink paintings to create a poetic and picturesque environment.

"Let the Bullets Fly" sets its story in a time reminiscent of the Ming Dynasty, using steam-powered trains and period-appropriate props to ground the story in a historical context.

Contrast and Parallelism:

Both films utilize contrast and parallelism to enhance the visual and emotional impact.

In *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,"* the serene bamboo forest fight contrasts with the intense combat, while *"Let the Bullets Fly"* juxtaposes calm moments with sudden action, creating a dynamic viewing experience.

Emotional and Narrative Enhancement:

Set design in both films significantly enhances the emotional and narrative depth. The poetic imagery in *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* deepens the romantic and philosophical undertones of the story, while the tightly controlled, suspenseful environments in *"Let the Bullets Fly"* amplify the tension and excitement of the plot.

Differences: Visual Style and Aesthetic Approach:

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" embraces a poetic, romantic aesthetic, reminiscent of traditional Chinese paintings. The scenes are designed to evoke a sense of calm and timeless beauty, with flowing movements and harmonious compositions. The use of light, shadow, and natural elements creates a dreamlike atmosphere.

"Let the Bullets Fly," on the other hand, employs a more gritty and realistic visual style.

The set design focuses on creating a sense of immediacy and chaos, with rapid scene changes, close-ups, and a raw, unfiltered look. The film's aesthetic is more aligned with the western genre, blending humor with violence and tension.

Use of Space and Environment:

In *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,"* vast natural landscapes like bamboo forests and ancient towns are central to the narrative, providing a backdrop that enhances the film's themes of freedom and constraint. The spacious, open environments allow for fluid, balletic action sequences.

"Let the Bullets Fly" often confines the action to smaller, more claustrophobic spaces like narrow streets and squares, heightening the sense of urgency and conflict. This tight spatial design intensifies the confrontations and underscores the film's themes of power struggles and survival.

Emphasis on Traditional vs. Modern Elements:

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" focuses on traditional elements, from the architecture to the natural settings, emphasizing a connection to historical and cultural roots. This traditionalism is mirrored in the characters' martial arts styles and the film's philosophical undertones.

"Let the Bullets Fly" incorporates more modern elements within its historical setting, such as the steam engine train juxtaposed with horse-drawn carriages. This blending of old and new creates a unique, anachronistic feel that supports the film's satirical and subversive narrative.

Tone and Mood:

The tone of *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* is meditative and lyrical, with an emphasis on internal conflicts and philosophical musings. The set design reflects this tone by creating tranquil, balanced compositions that invite contemplation.

In contrast, *"Let the Bullets Fly"* has a more frenetic and irreverent tone, with rapid shifts between humor and violence. The set design contributes to this mood by creating dynamic, unpredictable environments that maintain tension.

4.4.3 Lighting

Lighting is a crucial element in film, significantly impacting the narrative, mood, and overall aesthetic. *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* and *"Let the Bullets Fly"* use lighting in distinctive ways that reflect their unique styles and storytelling approaches.

Similarities: Mood and Atmosphere Creation:

Both films use lighting to create a specific mood and atmosphere that enhance the narrative. In *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,"* the lighting often creates a poetic, serene, and elegant atmosphere, aligning with the film's aesthetic of Chinese ink

paintings. In contrast, *"Let the Bullets Fly"* uses lighting to generate tension, excitement, and a sense of impending action.

Contrast Between Light and Shadow:

Both films employ contrast between light and shadow to add depth and dimension to the scenes. This technique helps in emphasizing the three-dimensionality of characters and objects, enhancing the visual storytelling.

Emphasis on Characterization:

The use of lighting in both films helps in character development. In *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,"* warm lighting is used to soften the features of characters, adding to their depth and complexity. Similarly, in *"Let the Bullets Fly,"* lighting is used to highlight the rugged and intense nature of the characters, contributing to their development and the narrative.

Differences: Lighting Style and Aesthetic Approach:

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" features a smooth, soft, and layered lighting style, creating a visual aesthetic similar to traditional Chinese ink paintings. The lighting is generally high in brightness, creating a fresh and elegant atmosphere that aligns with the film's poetic nature.

"Let the Bullets Fly," on the other hand, uses a more dynamic and contrasting lighting style. Bright lights and high-contrast light and shadow are used extensively to create a tense and suspenseful atmosphere, particularly during nighttime gun battles.

Use of Natural vs. Artificial Light:

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" often utilizes natural light to enhance the natural beauty and realism of the scenes. For example, the bamboo forest fight scene uses the dappled sunlight filtering through the bamboo to create a dynamic and visually stunning effect. *"Let the Bullets Fly"* primarily uses artificial lighting to create specific effects and moods. The film often employs bright artificial lights and strong contrasts to highlight the action and drama, especially in scenes of conflict and tension.

Color Temperature and Emotional Impact:

In *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,"* the color temperature varies to evoke different emotions. For instance, the use of warm orange-red light during Yu Jiaolong and Luo Xiaohu's scenes adds a romantic and dreamy quality, contrasting with the cooler tones used in other parts of the film to create a sense of calm and serenity.

"Let the Bullets Fly" utilizes a more uniform color temperature that tends towards brightness and high contrast, aiming to maintain tension. The use of bright and harsh lighting during action scenes creates a sense of urgency and danger, aligning with the film's fast-paced and intense narrative.

Symbolism Through Lighting:

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" uses lighting symbolically to enhance the poetic nature of the film. The interplay of light and shadow not only defines the physical space but also adds a layer of symbolic meaning, such as the use of warm light to signify emotional warmth and intimacy.

In *"Let the Bullets Fly,"* lighting is used more pragmatically to drive the plot and highlight the action. The symbolic use of lighting is less pronounced, with the primary focus on creating an engaging and thrilling visual experience.

4.4.4 Composition

The composition in film is integral to visual storytelling, influencing how the narrative is perceived and emotionally responded to. Both *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* and *"Let the Bullets Fly"* exhibit unique approaches to composition, reflecting their respective directors' artistic visions and cultural influences.

Similarities: Influence of Traditional Art Forms:

Both films draw inspiration from traditional art forms. *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* is heavily influenced by Chinese landscape painting, utilizing principles such as the unity of opposites and "leaving blank space" to create visually poetic scenes. *"Let the Bullets Fly"* also incorporates elements of traditional Chinese aesthetics, though in a more exaggerated and humorous manner.

Use of Framing:

Both films make extensive use of framing to structure their compositions. In "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*," door frames and window frames are used to create layers and depth, connecting different spaces and enhancing the narrative's emotional and aesthetic qualities. Similarly, "*Let the Bullets Fly*" employs various framing devices to add visual interest and humor, such as the oversized hot pot and the mahjong mask.

Conveying Emotional States:

Composition in both films serves to convey the emotional states of the characters. "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" uses the interplay of real and virtual spaces, foreground and background elements, to reflect the characters' inner turmoil and desires. "*Let the Bullets Fly*" uses exaggerated compositions and humorous props to highlight the absurdity and tension in the characters' situations.

Creating Atmosphere:

Both films use composition to create distinct atmospheres that support their storytelling. "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" creates a serene, poetic atmosphere through balanced compositions and the strategic use of empty space. "*Let the Bullets Fly*" creates a dynamic, often chaotic atmosphere through bold, unexpected compositions that surprise and engage.

Differences: Aesthetic Approach:

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" adheres to a refined and harmonious aesthetic, reminiscent of traditional Chinese ink paintings. The composition is carefully balanced, with a focus on natural beauty and poetic imagery.

"Let the Bullets Fly," in contrast, embraces a more eclectic and humorous aesthetic. The compositions are often exaggerated and whimsical, using visual surprises to entertain and provoke thought.

Narrative Function of Composition:

In *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,"* composition is used to enhance the film's thematic depth and emotional resonance. For instance, the scene where Yu Jiaolong jumps off the cliff uses the unity of opposites and empty space to create a poignant and mysterious atmosphere, suggesting her transcendence rather than her demise.

In *"Let the Bullets Fly,"* composition primarily serves to amplify the film's satirical and comedic elements. The use of exaggerated props and unconventional compositions creates a sense of absurdity and playfulness, aligning with the film's tone and narrative style.

Visual Hierarchy and Focus:

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" often uses subtle compositional techniques to guide the viewer's eye and create a sense of harmony. Elements like balance, density, and the

interplay of light and shadow are used to create a cohesive visual experience that complements the film's meditative quality.

"Let the Bullets Fly" employs a more direct and bold approach, using striking compositions and visual juxtapositions to capture the viewer's attention. The visual hierarchy is often disrupted to create a sense of surprise and engagement.

Symbolic Use of Space:

In *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,"* space is used symbolically to reflect the characters' journeys and internal conflicts. The integration of natural landscapes and architectural elements creates a seamless blend of reality and fantasy, enhancing the film's poetic narrative.

"Let the Bullets Fly" uses space more pragmatically to serve its fast-paced, action-oriented storyline. The compositions are designed to enhance the visual impact of the scenes, often using confined spaces to heighten tension and drive the narrative forward.

4.4.5 Costume

Costume design in film is an essential element that contributes significantly to character development, narrative progression, and the overall aesthetic of a film. *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* and *"Let the Bullets Fly"* showcase distinct approaches to costume design, reflecting their unique settings, periods, and thematic focuses.

Similarities: Period Accuracy and Cultural Reflection:

Both films place a strong emphasis on period accuracy and cultural reflection in their costume design. *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* showcases traditional Chinese attire that aligns with its historical setting, while *"Let the Bullets Fly"* reflects the Republic of China era with a mix of Western and traditional Chinese clothing.

Characterization Through Costume:

Costume design in both films is crucial for character development. In *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,"* costumes reflect the personalities and inner conflicts of characters such as Li Mubai and Yu Jiaolong. Similarly, in *"Let the Bullets Fly,"* costumes highlight the multifaceted nature of characters like Zhang Mazi and Huang Silang, using attire to emphasize their roles and traits.

Use of Fabric and Movement:

Both films utilize fabrics that enhance the sense of movement, a critical aspect in martial arts and action sequences. The flowing fabrics in *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* not only contribute to the aesthetic beauty but also facilitate the fluidity of martial arts choreography. *"Let the Bullets Fly"* employs similar techniques, using costumes that allow for dynamic action scenes and contribute to the visual impact of the film.

Differences: Aesthetic Approach and Style:

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" adopts a minimalist and elegant approach to costume design, with an emphasis on natural tones and simplicity that align with the film's poetic and serene atmosphere. Costumes such as the beige outfits worn by Li Mubai and Yu Jiaolong in the bamboo forest scenes reflect a timeless elegance and a connection to nature.

In contrast, *"Let the Bullets Fly"* features a more eclectic and vibrant aesthetic. The costumes designed by William Chang are marked by their boldness and diversity, reflecting the film's dynamic and often humorous tone. The mix of Western and traditional Chinese attire, as seen in characters like Zhang Mazi and Ma Bangde, adds to the film's visual richness and historical context.

Symbolic Use of Costume:

In *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,"* costumes are used symbolically to convey deeper themes and character arcs. The simplicity and uniformity of Li Mubai's attire reflect his inner turmoil and spiritual journey, while Yu Jiaolong's various outfits signify her transition from a sheltered aristocrat to a rebellious warrior.

"Let the Bullets Fly" uses costumes more for dramatic and comedic effect, emphasizing the characters' roles and the absurdity of their situations. Zhang Mazi's varied attire—from a white suit symbolizing elegance to a rugged military uniform—illustrates his multifaceted personality and the film's blend of satire and action.

Impact of Modernism:

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" subtly incorporates modernist elements within its traditional framework. The costumes, while rooted in historical accuracy, have a contemporary refinement that blends classicism with a detailed artistic texture.

"Let the Bullets Fly" overtly combines traditional and modern elements, reflecting the transitional period of the Republic of China era. The juxtaposition of Western fashion with traditional Chinese garments illustrates the cultural collisions of the time, adding layers of historical and cultural commentary to the film.

Functional Versus Aesthetic Focus:

The costume design in *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* serves both functional and aesthetic purposes, enhancing the fluidity and grace of martial arts scenes while maintaining visual harmony with the film's serene landscapes. The practical design allows for the physical demands of the action sequences while contributing to the film's overall beauty.

In *"Let the Bullets Fly,"* the costumes are more functionally diverse, reflecting the various roles and disguises of the characters. The mix-and-match style seen in Zhang Mazi's outfits underscores his versatility and adaptability, while the detailed and sometimes extravagant costumes of other characters add to the film's visual and narrative complexity.

4.4.6 Acting

Acting in film is a critical component that brings the narrative and characters to life. In martial arts movies, the portrayal of characters through acting is often intertwined with the choreography of action sequences, which serve as extensions of character development and thematic expression. *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* and *"Let the Bullets Fly"* employ distinct acting techniques to enhance their storytelling, reflecting their unique styles and directorial visions.

Similarities: Character-Driven Narratives:

Both films rely heavily on the depth and complexity of their characters to drive the narrative. In *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,"* characters like Li Mubai, Yu Xiulian, and Yu Jiaolong are portrayed with nuanced performances that reflect their internal conflicts and aspirations. Similarly, *"Let the Bullets Fly"* features strong characterizations of Zhang Mazi, Ma Bangde, and Huang Silang, each brought to life through distinctive acting that highlights their unique traits and motivations.

Integration of Action and Emotion:

In both films, action sequences are not merely physical confrontations but are deeply integrated with the emotional and psychological states of the characters. *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* uses the concept of "wuwu" movements, blending martial arts with dance to create a poetic expression of the characters' inner turmoil and relationships. *"Let the Bullets Fly"* combines fast-paced action with sharp dialogue and

emotional intensity, using physical confrontations to reveal character dynamics and advance the plot.

Cultural and Historical Context:

The actors in both films ground their performances in the cultural and historical contexts of the narratives. In "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*," the actors embody the traditional values and moral dilemmas of ancient Chinese society. In "*Let the Bullets Fly*," the performances reflect the chaotic and transitional period of the Republic of China era, blending traditional and modern influences to capture the complexity of the time.

Differences: Acting Styles and Techniques:

"*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" features a more subdued and introspective acting style, emphasizing subtle expressions and gestures. Chow Yun-fat's portrayal of Li Mubai is marked by a calm and meditative demeanor, reflecting his inner conflict and moral struggles. Michelle Yeoh as Yu Xiulian displays a restrained yet powerful performance, capturing the character's unspoken love and loyalty.

In contrast, "*Let the Bullets Fly*" showcases a more dynamic and expressive acting style. Jiang Wen's portrayal of Zhang Mazi is bold and charismatic, using physicality and vocal intensity to convey the character's leadership and inner turmoil. Ge You's Ma Bangde is characterized by a blend of humor and cunning, with exaggerated mannerisms that highlight the character's duplicity and survival instincts.

Use of Dialogue:

Dialogue in *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* is often poetic and reflective, contributing to the film's overall meditative tone. The interactions between characters are laden with subtext and symbolic meaning, reflecting their inner thoughts and emotions. For example, the conversations between Li Mubai and Yu Xiulian are filled with unspoken love and mutual respect, conveyed through subtle glances and measured words.

In *"Let the Bullets Fly,"* dialogue is rapid and witty, contributing to the film's energetic and humorous tone. The characters engage in sharp exchanges that reveal their intelligence and cunning. The use of fast-paced, clever dialogue enhances the film's dynamic rhythm and highlights the strategic mind games between characters, such as the exchanges between Zhang Mazi and Huang Silang.

Portrayal of Heroism and Morality:

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" portrays heroism and morality through the characters' adherence to traditional values and personal codes of honor. Li Mubai's moral integrity and Yu Xiulian's unwavering loyalty are central to their characters, with their actions reflecting a deep sense of duty and righteousness.

In *"Let the Bullets Fly,"* heroism is portrayed more ambiguously. Zhang Mazi, while a heroic figure, operates within a morally grey area, using cunning and sometimes ruthless tactics to achieve his goals. Ma Bangde's character represents the survivalist

mentality, often compromising his morals for personal gain. Huang Silang embodies the archetypal villain, ruthless and manipulative, yet also displays moments of strategic brilliance.

4.4.7 Movie Soundtrack

Movie Soundtrack is an essential component of the audio-visual language of cinema, contributing significantly to the narrative, emotional impact, and overall aesthetic of a film. The soundtracks of "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" and "*Let the Bullets Fly*" are integral to their storytelling, enhancing the themes and emotions portrayed on screen.

Similarities: Integration of Traditional and Modern Elements:

Both films blend traditional and modern musical elements to create a unique auditory experience. In "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*," Tan Dun combines traditional Chinese instruments like the pipa, xiao, and erhu with Western instruments such as the cello. This fusion mirrors the film's blend of ancient Chinese culture with contemporary cinematic techniques.

"*Let the Bullets Fly*" incorporates traditional Chinese music and instruments alongside modern compositions. Joe Hisaishi's "*The Sun Also Rises*" integrates a Western orchestral style with elements that evoke the historical setting of the Republic of China, creating a soundscape that is both nostalgic and modern.

Enhancement of Narrative and Emotional Depth:

Both soundtracks play a crucial role in enhancing the narrative and emotional depth of the films. In "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*," the music underscores the romantic and philosophical themes, amplifying the emotional weight of the characters' journeys. The use of the cello, for instance, adds a melancholic and introspective quality to Li Mubai's scenes, reflecting his inner conflict.

In "*Let the Bullets Fly*," the music enhances the film's dynamic and often humorous tone. The theme song "The Sun Also Rises" conveys a sense of heroism and melancholy, aligning with the film's depiction of Zhang Mazi's complex character. The soundtrack also uses local music styles to reflect the regional setting and cultural context, deepening the sense of immersion in the story.

Support of Action Sequences:

Both films use music effectively to support their action sequences. In "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*," the soundtrack during the bamboo forest fight blends traditional instruments with a rhythmic intensity that mirrors the fluid and poetic choreography. This combination elevates the martial arts scenes to an art form, blending movement and music seamlessly.

"*Let the Bullets Fly*" employs a more eclectic and vigorous musical approach during action scenes. The use of fast-paced, energetic compositions heightens the excitement

and tension of the confrontations, contributing to the film's overall sense of momentum and urgency.

Differences: Musical Style and Composition:

The musical style of "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" is characterized by its ethereal and poetic quality. Tan Dun's compositions are minimalist and often slow-paced, using silence and subtlety to create a contemplative atmosphere. This style complements the film's philosophical undertones and its emphasis on the beauty of nature and traditional Chinese culture.

In contrast, "*Let the Bullets Fly*" features a more eclectic and bold musical style. Joe Hisaishi's compositions are dynamic and varied, using a broader range of instruments and styles to match the film's diverse scenes and moods. The music is often more direct and impactful, reflecting the film's fast-paced narrative and satirical tone.

Role of Theme Music:

In "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*," the theme music is deeply integrated into the narrative structure. The cello theme recurs throughout the film, establishing a musical motif that ties together the characters' emotional arcs and the film's central themes of love, loss, and honor.

"*Let the Bullets Fly*" uses its theme music more as a standalone element that enhances key moments in the film. "*The Sun Also Rises*" serves as a powerful anthem that

encapsulates the film's heroic and melancholic spirit. However, the film also employs a variety of other musical pieces that reflect the shifting tones and settings of the story.

Cultural and Historical Representation:

The soundtrack of "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" is heavily influenced by traditional Chinese aesthetics, both in its choice of instruments and its compositional style. This focus on cultural authenticity enhances the film's portrayal of ancient China and its exploration of traditional values and philosophies.

"*Let the Bullets Fly*," while also incorporating traditional elements, places a greater emphasis on blending these with modern and Western musical styles. This reflects the film's setting in the Republic of China era, a time of cultural and political upheaval, and underscores the film's themes of conflict and transformation.

Impact of Music on Narrative Atmosphere:

The music in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is designed to evoke a sense of timeless beauty and emotional resonance. Its contemplative and poetic nature reflects the deeper themes of the film and reinforces the aesthetic harmony between the visuals and the soundtrack.

In *Let the Bullets Fly*, the energetic and varied compositions mirror the film's rapid pace and shifting tones. The soundtrack enhances the entertainment value and supports the dynamic rhythm of the unfolding drama.

4.5 The Influence of Cinematic Techniques In "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" And "Let The Bullets Fly" On Chinese Modern Cinema

Cinematic techniques play a crucial role in the development of a film, shaping its narrative, enhancing its aesthetic appeal, and creating emotional depth. Both "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*," directed by Ang Lee, and "*Let the Bullets Fly*," directed by Jiang Wen, utilize a variety of these techniques to achieve their distinct cinematic visions. By examining how these techniques influence the films, we can gain a deeper understanding of their contributions to cinematic expression and narrative development.

4.5.1 Enhancing Narrative Depth and Emotional Engagement

One of the primary functions of cinematic techniques is to enhance the narrative depth and emotional engagement of a film. In *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, the use of traditional Chinese elements in set design, lighting, and composition creates a poetic and romantic atmosphere that enhances the storytelling. The bamboo forest fight scene, for instance, is not just a display of martial arts but a visual metaphor for the characters' inner conflicts and philosophical themes. The swaying bamboo and the natural surroundings create a sense of fluidity and elegance that mirrors the characters' movements, making the scene not only visually stunning but also emotionally resonant.

Similarly, "*Let the Bullets Fly*" employs dynamic and high-contrast lighting to create tension and drama, aligning with its fast-paced narrative and satirical tone. The stark contrasts between light and shadow add depth to the scenes, emphasizing the rugged and intense nature of the characters. This approach maintains a heightened sense of

tension, enhancing the emotional impact of the film. The use of symbolic objects, such as the steam-powered train pulled by horses, adds an element of absurdity and humor, contributing to the film's narrative depth and enriching its multi-layered structure.

4.5.2 Creating Atmosphere and Visual Poetry

"Cinematic techniques are essential in establishing atmosphere and conveying visual poetry, as demonstrated in both '*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*' and '*Let the Bullets Fly*.' In '*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*,' director Ang Lee employs natural landscapes, such as bamboo forests and tranquil water towns, in combination with traditional Chinese aesthetics to create a visually poetic experience. The use of lighting, which often mimics the soft gradients and contrasting layers characteristic of Chinese ink paintings, enhances this poetic atmosphere. These choices not only provide visual beauty but also contribute to a contemplative and timeless setting that deeply enriches the narrative's emotional and aesthetic layers.

On the other hand, '*Let the Bullets Fly*' employs a more eclectic and exaggerated visual style, contributing to a dynamic and often chaotic atmosphere. Jiang Wen's use of confined spaces, such as narrow streets and bustling squares, amplifies the film's tension and sense of urgency. The inclusion of unconventional visual compositions—such as oversized hot pots and the use of mahjong masks—adds a layer of visual interest and humor. These choices not only reinforce the film's satirical tone but also distinguish its visual style from more traditional cinematic approaches, resulting in a unique and multi-dimensional aesthetic presentation.

4.5.3 Supporting Character Development and Thematic Expression

"Cinematic techniques play a crucial role in character development and thematic expression, as demonstrated by the use of costume design in both '*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*' and '*Let the Bullets Fly*.' In '*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*,' the minimalist and elegant costume design is carefully crafted to reflect the characters' personalities and internal struggles. For instance, Li Mubai's simple and unadorned attire symbolizes his moral integrity and his spiritual quest, serving as a visual cue to his inner journey. In contrast, Yu Jiaolong's evolving wardrobe—from traditional aristocratic garments to warrior attire—visually represents her transition from a sheltered aristocrat to a defiant and independent fighter. This progression in costume design, when combined with the film's poetic composition and lighting, enhances the understanding of the characters' emotional arcs and the broader thematic elements of honor, duty, and rebellion.

In '*Let the Bullets Fly*,' the bold and eclectic costumes are instrumental in conveying the film's dynamic and satirical tone. The juxtaposition of Western and traditional Chinese attire within the same narrative space reflects the cultural collisions of the Republic of China era, adding depth to the film's historical context. Zhang Mazi's varied costumes, for example, highlight his versatility and adaptability, symbolizing his ability to navigate the complex social and political landscapes of the time. The careful attention to costume design not only enriches the film's visual texture but also contributes significantly to the narrative by reinforcing character traits and enhancing the thematic exploration of power, identity, and resistance."

4.5.4 Enhancing Pacing and Rhythm

"Pacing and rhythm are essential components of cinematic storytelling, significantly shaped by the techniques employed by filmmakers. In '*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*,' Director Ang Lee adopts a fluid and poetic pacing style that allows for a full appreciation of the film's visual splendor and emotional nuances. The film skillfully balances serene, meditative scenes with intense action sequences, creating a rhythmic flow that mirrors the thematic contrast between tranquility and conflict. This deliberate pacing not only enhances the narrative's emotional depth but also maintains engagement by allowing moments of reflection amidst the action.

In contrast, '*Let the Bullets Fly*,' directed by Jiang Wen, utilizes a brisk and dynamic pacing approach, characterized by rapid cuts, frequent close-ups, and swift scene transitions. This technique generates a sense of urgency and exhilaration, propelling the narrative forward at a breakneck speed. The film strategically incorporates pauses, such as the repeated line '*Let the bullets fly* for a while,' to build anticipation and inject humor, contributing to a rhythm that is both unpredictable and engaging. This dynamic pacing not only supports the film's narrative drive but also amplifies its entertainment value, making it a captivating experience that maintains attention throughout.

4.5.5 Integrating Music to Enhance Emotional Impact

Music is a powerful tool in cinema that enhances the emotional impact of a film. In '*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*,' Tan Dun's score combines traditional Chinese instruments with Western elements to create a unique auditory experience. The music

underscores the romantic and philosophical themes of the film, amplifying the emotional weight of the characters' journeys. The use of the cello, for instance, adds a melancholic and introspective quality to Li Mubai's scenes, reflecting his inner conflict and adding depth to the narrative.

"Let the Bullets Fly" features an eclectic and vigorous soundtrack composed by Joe Hisaishi, which blends traditional Chinese music with modern orchestral elements. The music enhances the film's dynamic and humorous tone, supporting the rapid pace and shifting moods of the narrative. The theme song *"The Sun Also Rises"* conveys a sense of heroism and melancholy, aligning with the film's depiction of Zhang Mazi's complex character. The soundtrack not only supports the narrative but also enhances emotional engagement, making the film more impactful.

4.5.6 Creating Symbolic and Thematic Resonance

Cinematic techniques also play a crucial role in creating symbolic and thematic resonance in films. In *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,"* the symbolic use of objects, such as the Qingming Sword, adds layers of meaning to the narrative. The sword symbolizes identity, grievances, and a connection to the spiritual realm, reflecting the deeper themes embedded in the film. The poetic imagery created through the integration of natural landscapes and traditional Chinese aesthetics enhances the thematic resonance, making the film a profound exploration of love, honor, and spiritual quest.

"Let the Bullets Fly" employs symbolic objects and exaggerated compositions to create a satirical commentary on the socio-political dynamics of the Republic of China era. The use of a steam-powered train pulled by horses, for instance, adds an element of absurdity and humor, highlighting the contradictions and conflicts of the time. This symbolic approach not only enhances the narrative but also encourages deeper reflection on the themes of power, justice, and revenge.

4.5.7 Contributing to Cultural Representation and Identity

Cinematic techniques also contribute to cultural representation and identity, highlighting the unique aspects of Chinese culture and history. *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* employs traditional Chinese aesthetics, martial arts choreography, and cultural symbols to create a film that is deeply rooted in Chinese heritage. The film's visual and thematic elements reflect the values and philosophies of ancient Chinese society, offering a window into the cultural and spiritual landscape of the time. This cultural representation not only adds depth to the narrative but also enriches the understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture.

"Let the Bullets Fly" reflects the cultural and historical context of the Republic of China era, illustrating the complexities and contradictions of the time. The film's use of traditional and modern elements, such as Western and Chinese attire, steam-powered trains, and martial arts, creates a rich tapestry of cultural representation. The satirical and humorous tone of the film highlights the socio-political dynamics and the cultural collisions of the era, offering a critical commentary on the historical and cultural

identity of China. This cultural representation not only adds depth to the narrative but also enriches the understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture.

In conclusion, cinematic techniques play a vital role in shaping the narrative, enhancing the aesthetic appeal, and creating an emotional impact in films. "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" and "*Let the Bullets Fly*" exemplify the effective use of these techniques to achieve their distinct cinematic visions. By enhancing narrative depth, creating atmosphere, supporting character development, and integrating music, these techniques contribute to the overall success and impact of the films. Furthermore, they engage through visual and auditory appeal, create symbolic and thematic resonance, and contribute to cultural representation and identity. The innovative and thoughtful use of cinematic techniques in these films not only enhances their artistic value but also enriches the cinematic experience, making them memorable and impactful works of art.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to synthesize and enhance the understanding and interpretation of the overall results of our study. It will revisit and refine the research purpose and questions, providing a comprehensive overview of how our findings address these core elements. Additionally, this chapter will thoroughly discuss the limitations encountered during the study, critically evaluating their impact on the results. Finally, it will offer detailed recommendations for future research, emphasizing areas that require further exploration to build on the insights gained from this study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Based on the comparative analysis of the cinematic techniques in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Let the Bullets Fly*, the following key findings emerge from the analysis:

Cinematic Techniques and Narrative Structure

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon employs carefully designed sets, costumes, and subtle lighting to enhance the emotional depth of the film, while also visually expressing the internal conflicts and philosophical themes of the characters. Particularly in the martial arts scenes, these techniques emphasize the characters' spiritual struggles and emotional turmoil. In contrast, *Let the Bullets Fly* uses rapid editing, bold color choices, and exaggerated compositions to intensify the film's rhythm and energy. These techniques

help establish a tense, satirical atmosphere, reinforcing the social critique at the heart of the narrative.

Cultural Representation and Cinematic Techniques

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon integrates traditional Chinese aesthetic elements, such as martial arts choreography, natural landscapes, and symbolic props (e.g., the Green Destiny Sword), to explore themes of loyalty, responsibility, and freedom rooted in Chinese culture. The film's use of set design, costumes, and martial arts action deepens its cultural and philosophical context. Conversely, *Let the Bullets Fly* employs modern cinematic techniques to depict the socio-political tensions of early 20th-century China, using humor and satire to critique the complexity and injustice of the era. The film blends traditional and contemporary elements to highlight cultural and historical tensions within Chinese society.

Emotional Engagement and Visual Effects

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon creates a poetic atmosphere through elegant martial arts choreography and refined visual composition, adding layers of emotional depth to the narrative. The use of slow-motion action scenes not only showcases physical confrontations but also deepens the emotional undertones of the characters' struggles. In contrast, *Let the Bullets Fly* employs rapid editing and bold visual effects to generate a sense of energy and tension. The visual techniques in this film help emphasize its political satire, while maintaining a dynamic rhythm throughout.

Character Development and Psychological Depth

In *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, the internal conflicts of the characters are effectively conveyed through cinematic techniques, particularly in the emotional arcs of Li Mubai and Yu Shu Lien. The design of sets, lighting, and composition visually represents their psychological struggles and emotional depth. In *Let the Bullets Fly*, rapid editing and contrasting visual elements help reveal the complexity of characters like Zhang Mazi and Huang Silang. Their moral and ideological contradictions are visually emphasized through their interactions and the pacing of the film.

Symbolism and Thematic Expression

The Green Destiny Sword in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* serves not only as a symbol of identity and fate but also as a representation of the personal and moral conflicts within the martial arts world. The film's natural landscapes and traditional architecture, through their visual representation and symbolism, reflect Chinese philosophical and cultural ideas. *Let the Bullets Fly* uses symbolic elements, such as the train and horse-drawn carriages, to critique the social and political structures of the time. These symbols deepen the film's satire and social commentary, reinforcing its critique of power and corruption.

This study provides an intellectual and academic account of the cinematic aspects of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Let the Bullets Fly*, which have largely been overlooked in the existing literature. The findings contribute to the understanding of how specific cinematic techniques are employed to convey both aesthetic and cultural meanings, filling a gap in the research on Chinese commercial cinema. By offering a

detailed comparative analysis, this study highlights how the directors of both films use visual storytelling to shape narratives, and the implications of these techniques for modern Chinese cinema.

The theoretical impact of this study lies in its ability to expand existing cinematic theory, particularly in the context of Chinese film. It offers new insights into the integration of traditional Chinese aesthetics with modern filmmaking practices, showing how these films contribute to the evolving understanding of cinematic techniques in global cinema. Furthermore, this research underscores the significance of film as a cultural vehicle, illustrating how Chinese filmmakers negotiate cultural identity within the broader international film landscape.

From a practical perspective, this study suggests that filmmakers and industry practitioners can draw on the findings to enhance their understanding of how cinematic techniques can influence audience engagement. Specifically, the comparison between the two films provides valuable insights into the different ways in which narrative depth, cultural representation, and emotional resonance can be achieved through visual style, set design, lighting, and other cinematic techniques. These findings can serve as a guide for future film production, contributing to the global appeal and commercial success of Chinese cinema.

5.2.1 RQ1: What Are The Elements of Differences and Similarities Between The Cinematic Techniques In "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" And "Let The Bullets Fly"?

The first question explores the similarities and differences in the cinematic techniques employed by both films to convey their narratives. These techniques prompt deeper contemplation and enrich the viewing experience.

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" and *"Let the Bullets Fly"* exhibit numerous similarities and differences in their cinematic approaches. The similarities lie in their use of complex camera language and scene design to enhance narrative effect, and both films exhibit high visual artistry. However, the differences are rooted in their unique styles and the directors' creative intentions.

Firstly, in terms of scene design, *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* predominantly utilizes traditional Chinese architecture and natural landscapes, such as Huizhou-style buildings and bamboo forests, creating a poetic and romantic atmosphere. In contrast, *"Let the Bullets Fly"* reconstructs the towns and social environments of the early Beiyang era, portraying the social realities and absurdity of that turbulent period. Secondly, regarding lighting effects, *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* employs soft lighting and shadows to reflect the characters' emotional changes and the philosophical depth of the story. For instance, the film extensively uses natural light and gentle lighting to highlight the characters' facial expressions and movements. Conversely, *"Let*

the Bullets Fly" uses strong contrast lighting and shadows to amplify the film's dramatic tension and sense of irony, infusing the movie with dark humor and satire.

In terms of cinematography, both films excel. *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* showcases graceful moving shots and meticulously designed compositions to illustrate the characters' agility and elegance in the martial arts world. In contrast, *"Let the Bullets Fly"* employs rapid editing and dynamic camera movements, creating a fast-paced, thrilling viewing experience. Additionally, the costume design in both films reflects their distinct characteristics. The costume design in *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* emphasizes the elegance and intricacy of traditional Chinese attire, highlighting the characters' identities and personalities. Meanwhile, the costume design in *"Let the Bullets Fly"* is more diverse, blending the reality of the era with exaggerated artistic styles, emphasizing the characters' absurdity and humor.

A comparative analysis of the cinematic techniques in *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* and *"Let the Bullets Fly"* reveals the unique and shared aspects of their narrative and visual presentation. Despite the differences in their specific execution, both films successfully convey their respective stories and themes through masterful cinematic techniques.

5.2.2 RQ2: What Influence of Cinematic Techniques In "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" And "Let The Bullets Fly" On Chinese Modern Cinema?

"The second question examines the impact of cinematic techniques in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Let the Bullets Fly* on the overall structure and expression of the films. By analyzing the application of these techniques, we can understand how they enhance narrative effectiveness, emotional expression, and the overall cinematic experience.

Firstly, the cinematic techniques in *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* significantly enhance narrative effectiveness and emotional expression. The film's scene design and lighting effects not only showcase the aesthetic beauty of traditional Chinese culture but also deepen the emotional conflicts between characters and the philosophical depth of the story through meticulous visual presentation. For example, the bamboo forest fight scene, with its combination of soft lighting and natural environment, creates a poetic and mystical atmosphere that reveals and deepens the characters' inner worlds. Additionally, the action choreography and slow-motion usage in *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* greatly enhance the film's visual appeal and artistic value. The martial arts scenes not only display the actors' superb skills but also, Through graceful movements and fluid camera motion, the film constructs a surreal martial arts world, heightening the sense of immersion and visual impact.

On the other hand, the cinematic techniques in *Let the Bullets Fly* create a strong impact through its unique narrative style and visual presentation. The film's rapid editing and

dynamic camera work establish a tense and thrilling rhythm, reinforcing the intensity of the storytelling. Meanwhile, the use of lighting contrast and compositional techniques strengthens the story's dramatic and satirical elements, effectively highlighting the film's underlying social critique. These techniques also reveal the complexity of human nature and the absurdity of social reality through nuanced character portrayal and scene design. For instance, the film's camera language and visual composition, through detailed depictions of character expressions and actions, illustrate the multifaceted nature and inner conflicts of the characters, deepening the psychological and thematic dimensions of the narrative.

The cinematic techniques in both *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Let the Bullets Fly* not only enhance the narrative effectiveness and emotional expression of the films but also, through the skillful combination of visual and auditory elements, elevate the comprehension of the films' themes. The application of these techniques demonstrates the artistic pursuits of the filmmakers and provides profound reflection and emotional resonance.

5.3 Discussion

This section provides a critical discussion of the findings derived from the comparative analysis of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Let the Bullets Fly*, with reference to the existing literature. The discussion is organized based on the research questions and objectives, focusing on the similarities and differences in cinematic techniques, as well as the influence of these techniques on modern Chinese cinema.

Differences and Similarities in Cinematic Techniques

In terms of cinematic techniques, both films share a commitment to high production value and innovative visual storytelling, yet their approaches diverge significantly. *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* utilizes classical Chinese aesthetics, notably in its mise-en-scène, lighting, and choreography, to convey deep philosophical and cultural themes. The fluid, almost dreamlike quality of the martial arts choreography, particularly in the bamboo forest scene, reflects traditional Chinese ink painting aesthetics, blending action with art to evoke emotional depth (Zhang, 2017). This technique, emphasizing visual beauty, is an essential aspect of the film's success in balancing action and philosophical inquiry.

On the other hand, *Let the Bullets Fly* employs a more modern, satirical style of filmmaking. Jiang Wen uses rapid editing, dark humor, and a more chaotic visual style to critique the political and social dynamics of 1920s China. The composition and camera movements in *Let the Bullets Fly* are marked by exaggerated, almost absurd action sequences that echo Western action films while also infusing sharp, social commentary. This juxtaposition between high-octane action and biting satire highlights the differences in how cinematic techniques are used to achieve narrative and thematic goals.

In terms of sound design, *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* enhances the emotional depth and cultural atmosphere of the film through a combination of traditional instruments and background music. The use of traditional instruments such as the

guzheng and pipa not only adds a rich Oriental flavor to the film but also, through the integration of music and visuals, enhances the understanding of the plot and the characters' emotions. On the other hand, *"Let the Bullets Fly"* uses modern sound effects and music to create a strong auditory impact, enhancing the dramatic effect of the film. The design of sound effects not only increases the audiovisual experience but also, through the contrast and conflict of sounds, reveals the diversity of society and human nature.

Additionally, costume and art design play a crucial role in both films. *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* showcases a rich historical and cultural atmosphere through carefully designed traditional costumes and settings, visually presenting the charm of classical aesthetics. In contrast, *"Let the Bullets Fly"* presents the social landscape and cultural background of a specific historical period through innovative designs of Republican-era costumes and settings. This visual design not only enhances the film's realism but also, through the contrast of visual elements, conveys the director's unique insights into history and society.

These cinematic techniques are not just intended to display artistic beauty but also to convey deeper cultural and social critiques. *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"*, through its exquisite visual effects and profound philosophical connotations, explores the complex relationships within human nature and society. Meanwhile, *"Let the Bullets Fly"*, through its compact narrative rhythm and strong visual impact, reveals social injustices and the darker aspects of human nature.

Cultural and Social Impact

Both films contribute significantly to the portrayal and negotiation of Chinese culture in modern cinema. *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* bridges the gap between traditional Chinese cultural values and global cinematic trends, introducing international audiences to the philosophical depth and aesthetic beauty of Chinese martial arts films. Its success abroad helped to establish Chinese cinema as a global force, influencing filmmakers worldwide in how they approach storytelling and visual composition.

Meanwhile, *Let the Bullets Fly* critiques the socio-political landscape of early 20th-century China through a satirical lens, using its cinematic techniques not only to entertain but also to provoke thought about issues of corruption, power, and inequality. Its bold narrative and unique visual style have been influential in shaping the modern Chinese film industry, demonstrating that Chinese cinema can be both entertaining and socially conscious (Liu, 2021).

Because of the outstanding quality of these two films, they have also significantly influenced many subsequent Chinese films. *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* has had a profound impact on later wuxia films. Firstly, through its exquisite visual effects and unique narrative style, it redefined the aesthetic standards of modern wuxia films. This style has been widely imitated in later wuxia films, such as Zhang Yimou's *"Hero"* and *"House of Flying Daggers"*, which borrowed from *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"*'s approach to martial arts scenes, combining wuxia elements with an elegant aesthetic style to form a trend known as "wuxia aesthetics." Secondly, *"Crouching Tiger,*

Hidden Dragon" deepened character development, breaking away from the traditional wuxia film's focus on action-dominated narratives. It integrated internal conflicts and philosophical reflections into the wuxia world, influencing many later films of the genre. For example, Chen Kaige's *"The Promise"* attempts to explore themes of humanity, fate, and choice within a wuxia framework, a direction influenced by *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"*'s emphasis on emotion and thought.

On the other hand, *"Let the Bullets Fly"* has significantly impacted Chinese action films and black comedy. The film's unique narrative style and tense action scenes provided new creative directions for many later films focused on action and social satire. Jiang Wen combined rapid editing, tight narrative, and social critique, making the film both entertaining and intellectually engaging. This style has continued in subsequent films, such as *"Mr. Six"*, which employs a similar social satire and black comedy style to explore the complexities of modern society and human conflict. Simultaneously, *"Let the Bullets Fly"* has also had a deep impact on Chinese action films. It not only highlights action but also weaves in complex characters and multiple plot twists, forming a unique narrative rhythm. This style is evident in later films such as *"Cock and Bull"*, where directors strive to enhance the tension and depth of the film through more intricate narrative structures.

Furthermore, these two films have had a profound influence on the representation and shaping of Chinese culture. *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* successfully connected traditional Chinese wuxia culture with global audiences. The deep cultural foundation

behind the film is a key factor in its global success. Wuxia culture itself possesses a strong national identity, and the film, by showcasing the chivalric spirit, traditional ethics, and the personal conflicts within it, conveys the tension between individual freedom and social responsibility in Eastern philosophy. This conflict has had a deep influence on Chinese culture and has also sparked global reflection on human nature and morality. Confucian ideals are also reflected in the relationships between characters, such as their emphasis on family, country, and duty. The concept of responsibility and loyalty in Confucian thought is one of the film's core themes, and in a context of global cultural diversity, the film provides a deeper understanding and appreciation of these ideas. Additionally, the Daoist philosophy of "harmony between humans and nature," as expressed in the bamboo forest fight scene, further deepens the influence of Chinese culture.

"Let the Bullets Fly", on the other hand, reflects the unique social structure and historical background of China during the Republican era. The film's satire and critique, especially of power, corruption, and class struggle, are deeply rooted in Chinese culture, while these themes also have universal relevance globally. Jiang Wen explores the power dynamics and social injustices of China's historical process, closely related to the country's real societal conditions, reflecting the complexity of China's modern history. The film's depiction of traditional Chinese values such as loyalty and strategy represent the cultural perceptions of that specific historical period. The actions and choices of the characters in such a complex social environment embody the traditional Chinese

cultural reflections on power, loyalty, and betrayal. These culturally embedded ideas, expressed through the film, influence the perception of Chinese history and culture.

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" brought the spiritual world of traditional China to the global stage through wuxia culture, while "Let the Bullets Fly" used black humor and social critique to showcase the diversity and complexity of modern China. The success of these two films lies in their ability not only to present the uniqueness of Chinese culture but also to resonate through universal cultural symbols and human themes. Chinese culture in these films is not just a backdrop but a profound cultural force driving their global success. This suggests that, as Chinese cinema rises on the international stage, more filmmakers are incorporating elements of Chinese culture to convey broader cultural and intellectual content globally.

These two films were able to achieve global popularity for several reasons, including their unique narrative styles, strong cultural symbolism, cross-cultural universality, and high-level cinematic techniques. First, both "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" and "*Let the Bullets Fly*" demonstrate unique visual and narrative styles, making them stand out in the global film market. Ang Lee's "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*" breaks the traditional framework of wuxia films by combining traditional wuxia elements with delicate emotional storytelling, moving away from the action-dominated narrative of wuxia films. "*Let the Bullets Fly*", on the other hand, uses fast-paced storytelling and black humor to present a distinctive narrative approach on the international stage. Jiang Wen combines traditional action film elements with social satire, creating a tense

storyline with thought-provoking themes. This narrative approach is not only entertaining but also, through clever satire, addresses deeper social issues, breaking the stereotypical image often associated with Chinese cinema.

The success of these two films globally is also due to their exploration of universal human themes within a cross-cultural context. While *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* Primarily tells the story of chivalric spirit and personal choices in the wuxia world, the human struggles and the pursuit of freedom and love resonate as universal values. Regardless of whether the audience is from the East or the West, they can find a sense of connection in the emotions and choices of the characters, enabling them to better understand the films' messages. *"Let the Bullets Fly"*, through its depiction of social injustice and power struggles, explores the complexities of corruption, power, and human nature. Although the story is set in Republican-era China, the film's social critiques and black humor are universally relevant across the world. The film's satire of power, while also showcasing a pursuit of justice, carries a universal appeal, regardless of cultural background.

Both films also owe their success to their high level of cinematic production and international recognition through awards. Ang Lee's *"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"* won multiple major awards at the Oscars, including Best Foreign Language Film, bringing increased attention to the film globally and opening the door for other Chinese films to enter international markets. The film's exquisite action choreography, visual effects, and musical composition are of world-class quality, and these elements

enable global audiences to appreciate the film's high production value. While *Let the Bullets Fly* did not receive Oscars like *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, it achieved notable success at global film festivals and in international markets. Jiang Wen's directorial talent and the high production quality of the film, especially its innovative narrative and exploration of complex social issues, have contributed to its recognition globally.

In summary, through a comparative analysis of the cinematic techniques in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Let the Bullets Fly*, it is evident that these techniques not only enhance the artistic appeal of the films but also serve as important tools for the directors to express their thoughts and cultural perspectives. The application of these techniques provides a rich audiovisual experience while revealing broader social issues and cultural critiques through profound cultural and social commentaries. This analysis offers valuable insights for filmmakers and provides a new perspective for understanding and appreciating the cultural connotations and social critiques embedded in the films. Through their different cinematic techniques and narrative methods, these two films convey deep cultural and social meanings and promote a global understanding and recognition of Chinese culture.

5.4 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter has extensively examined and substantiated the research question with comprehensive evidence. Through a detailed discussion, we have delved

into a more nuanced exploration of the cinematic techniques used in "*Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*" and "*Let the Bullets Fly*," supported by additional critical data.

Although these films are commercial successes, they have also contributed significantly to the evolution of Chinese cinema and its global perception. "*Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*" with its profound martial arts choreography and rich cultural elements, and "*Let the Bullets Fly*" with its unique narrative style and social commentary, exemplify the versatility and depth of Chinese filmmaking. The success of these films demonstrates that Chinese cinema can be both artistically significant and commercially viable.

On the whole, *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* and *Let the Bullets Fly* serve as pivotal case studies in the application of cinematic techniques and their impact on storytelling. They illustrate how technical elements like cinematography, editing, and sound can enhance narrative depth and engagement. These films have not only pushed the boundaries of genre but also influenced future filmmakers by showcasing the potential of integrating traditional cultural elements with innovative cinematic techniques.

This comparative study has shown a thirst for diverse perspectives in cinema and the real, substantive benefits of showcasing a variety of voices and stories. It is evident that the thoughtful application of cinematic techniques can elevate a film's artistic and commercial success, and this understanding will benefit both practitioners and scholars in the field of film studies.

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